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The Leopard of Lancianus and Other Stories

by

Maurice Francis Egan

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THE LEOPARD OF LANCIANUS

AND OTHER STORIES

BY

MAURICE FRANCIS EGAN.

Author of "Jasper Thorne," "Chatelaine of the Roses," "Jack Chumleigh," etc., etc.



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This book is Dedicated
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THE LEOPARD OF LANCIANUS.

I.

It was in the summer long ago—as far back as the August of the year of our Lord 55. Hermanus, whose muscles were trained in all the sports of his time, had set forth from his home for a holiday on the beautiful Rhine; and he had enjoyed himself in strange countries by mating his strength with all the young athletes, throwers of the disc and wrestlers he could meet.

Hermanus was a strong lad, with long curling yellow hair, a bronzed skin, and the light blue eyes of his people. As the son of a great Saxon noble he was attended by half a dozen servants, proud of their young master's skill. These attendants were as robust and strong as he was. They went with him everywhere because his state required it; but, as was the custom of the young Germans, he received no luxurious attention at their hands. His bath was not the rich

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and exquisite bath of the Romans, but a cool stream in any shaded spot. Hermanus delighted to be in danger, and he knew no fear because he had never met one that could make him afraid; game he could kill;—the berries by the wayside, the honey of the bee's hidden store,—even the meat of the wild boar—gave him and his attendants sufficient to eat. As for drink, he was obliged to content himself with water, for though his men made a fiery drink of honey which they called mead, he was not permitted to partake of it.

It was hot in this August weather, and he wore a thin tunic, confined at his waist by a leather belt, the buckle of which was a finely carved medal. This alone betokened his rank. His companions had wandered off in search of game, and Hermanus had flung himself beneath a great oak, tired by the long walk of the morning. The air was so still, that Hermanus half expected to see a deer make its way through the fern, to drink from the stream. He waited, but no animal came. He could never be idle; it was not in his nature; he drew from the breast of his tunic a reed pipe, and tried an air of home. Sud-

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denly he paused. Surely there was a movement in the low shrubbery. He had not sufficient energy just then to arise, so he kept his place, and went on with his tune; he struck a new note that pleased him; he added another.

"O Wodin!" he said, delighted, "I have made a new air to my old song."

He tried the beginning of the tune over again, and added measure to measure. It was a simple air, repeated, with a fantastic ending.

"I will put some new words to it!" he said, joyously. "And Hermangilda shall have it as my gift!"

He reflected, knit his smooth brow, folded his arms, and sat erect. He took a stylus from a box which lay with other things near him, and prepared to write.

"Why should I write?" he said, impatiently. "I can make the song in my own head without the help of the stylus, which I have never loved." He tried the air again; and, while he was absorbed in this occupation, an animal, lithe and graceful, drew nearer to him, with such ease as not even to make the leaves rustle. Hermanus laid down his pipe, and closing his eyes, sang,—

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"Come, shepherd, have you seen my love
Among the meadow grass so green,
Where nodding flowers of golden sheen
Raise smiling faces sweet above?"

"Ah, my sister will like *that*," he said, "dear little sister,—how I love her!"

He opened his eyes, and, for an instant, fear almost possessed his fearless heart. In front of him, with head almost touching his, was a beautiful leopard. He sprang to his feet; the leopard turned and fled; and Hermanus, grasping his short sword, followed it, crashing through the underbrush. On the leopard sped, with long and graceful leaps; on went Hermanus. The lithe beast vanished in a dark-green labyrinth of bushes, sprinkled with thorns and red berries. After him plunged Hermanus, bent on conquest all the more because this creature was the first that had ever made him know fear. The leopard doubled and disappeared among the thorny shrubs. Hermanus, disconcerted, lost his balance, and fell headlong into a group of men who occupied an open glade in a grove of beech trees.

Recovering himself, he glanced about him. Three stalwart and bronzed men, with long

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blonde beards, lay in the centre, casting dice from a golden goblet. Two others were wrestling, and, tied to a tree, was a lad of about eighteen years of age. There was a blood stain on his olive-hued cheek; his tunic, heavily embroidered with purple and gold, was torn, and a superb belt of silver, encrusted with sapphires and turquoises, lay near him broken. His cloak, of fine azure-colored stuff, had just been torn from him by a fifth burly ruffian, as Hermanus involuntarily entered. He sat still, gazing neither to the right nor to the left; his proud face did not show the pain and shame he felt, though his hands, cruelly bound with heavy thongs, moved nervously. Hermanus was at once attracted to the impassive, boyish face; before he could speak, one of the dice-playing barbarians caught sight of him, and pointed to the rich clasp of his girdle.

"Ho!" he said, "ho! hither comes another young eagle with gold in his beak,—we shall take the gold and cut the eagle's wings!"

Hermanus scowled, not daring to speak until his breath came back, for the quick run had somewhat tired him.

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The other dice-players yawned and laughed.

"Slaves!" said Hermanus, haughtily. "How dare you speak thus to me? If I did as I ought to do, I'd cut the throat of each of you!"

He spoke in their own tongue. The wrestlers paused, and, looking at the boy, bent almost double with laughter. The dice-players, brutal looking knaves, merely shrugged their shoulders.

The bodies of these men were clothed in skins roughly tied about them by thongs of untanned leather. The principal dice-player had, clasped upon the bear skin on his left shoulder a buckle similar to that which Hermanus wore at his belt; it was of beautiful and peculiar workmanship.

"He knows the Saxon speech," said the larger of the dice-players, who wore a cock's feather in a fillet that confined his long, yellow curls, "and methinks he looks somewhat like the little princess whom we sold"—

"Silence, Armin," said the other, interrupting his whisper. "In truth, he looks much like the child, and he is perhaps the brother she wailed so much about. Well, she is gone,—'twas a good bargain; and I am avenged for the blow the

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great Lord Hermanus gave me once!—This sprig of impudence is speaking in an unknown tongue to our prisoner there. By Thor!—the haughty Roman boy is gentle enough at hearing his own speech!"

Hermanus, whose mother was a Christian, and had taught him Latin, addressed the prisoner in the Roman tongue.

"I am Lancianus, son of Marcus Palatius, a Roman patrician," answered the boy, in a voice that did not tremble, "and, if my hands were free, I should teach this robber that death is a swift thing. I am travelling with my preceptor and a dozen slaves and freeman to Gaul. Anon I left them, to take a run along the river bank with my pet leopard,—these beasts beset me, and here I am!"

The wrestlers had resumed their play; Hermanus was not interesting to them. Two of the dice-players went back to their game; the third, —he of the cock's feather,—continued to watch Hermanus.

The Saxon boy met his eye firmly, and the barbarian almost smiled to see the defiance of this stripling.

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"How dare you molest a Roman citizen?" demanded Hermanus, grasping his short sword.

Casparus laughed.

"Insolent boy!" he answered. "I, Casparus of the Dragon's Brood, dare anything!"

"And *I*, Hermanus, son of Herman, dare everything,—in a good cause. Release this prisoner!"

Casparus fixed his eyes on the clasp of the belt of Hermanus, and hastily threw a fold of his bearskin over the medal clasped upon his shoulder.

"Whence that clasp?" asked Casparus, abruptly.

"'Twas my mother's;—there are only two,—the other my little sister,—whom the gods protect!—weareth night and day." Hermanus repented at once the quickness of his answer, and fixed his eyes for a moment upon the wrestlers, with a view of measuring his strength with them. The odds were against him, he reflected; but, if he could free the young Roman, two brave men might fight well enough to gain safety. And yet, as he looked at the blood-stained face of the Roman boy, his heart sank. What could two boys do against this rugged band? Still, he, the

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son of Herman, would show a brave front to these bandits!

"And those men think they wrestle?" he asked, contemptuously. "They are bunglers."

Casparus laughed again;—truly, this boy's insolence surpassed anything he had known. He had avenged himself terribly on the Lord Herman for an insult done in their days of youth; he was content; but, if he could sell this boy for a good price to a Roman slave dealer in Gaul and get a ransom for the young Lancianus, it would be well.

"Hermanus," said Casparus, sneering, "you say my men are bunglers, why not try a bout with one of them?"

"Wilt thou give me this Roman youth and let him go with me, free, if I conquer both these men?"

Hermanus' eyes sparkled; he had observed that the wrestler, though alert, lacked the finer skill which makes art more than a match for strength.

"I promise," said Casparus, smiling.

Hermanus called to the wrestlers, and explained the promise of their chief.

"We promise!" they cried, laughing boister-

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ously, and the dice-players echoed their words. Hermanus told the Roman boy the meaning of this scene.

"You are foolish," Lancianus said, "the burliest of these brutes will crush you as a big ape crushes a nut between its teeth. You are noble, I know, by this action. Flee while you can,—the mongrel herd shall pay for this! *I* may die at their hands, but Marcus Palatius, my father, will see that each one of them dies as curs should. Go!—and Mercury speed thee!"

"I will not!" said Hermanus. "Seest thou not that these wrestlers lack much? they use not their toes, to take a firm hold of the kind earth."

"They are carrion!" answered Lancianus.

Hermanus threw off his tunic, and stood bare only for the silken cloth about his loins; he cast away his low boots; he felt new life within him, as his naked feet touched the mother-earth.

"I am ready!" he said.

The bigger wrestler advanced; Hermanus made the usual feints exacted of their pupils by the masters of the art of wrestling. His opponent caught him in his arms, and strove to throw him by a dexterous twist to the left. Hermanus

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pressed his throat in a hard grip, and, as the man strove to protest, suddenly caught him on both sides and tried to crush his ribs; the barbarian felt as if his lungs and heart were bursting, and started back, falling as he went.

"The other!" said Hermanus, calmly.

"A trick!" cried the dice-players.

"No trick," said the second wrestler, glad to see his rival overcome, and with firm faith in his own powers.

Hermanus knew how to save his strength; he breathed with his usual freedom; not a drop of perspiration showed upon his skin.

The barbarians gathered about the two. The wrestler was smaller, slighter, more agile than his predecessor; but beside the slim boy, he seemed a giant.

"Begin!" said Casparus, much interested; then softly to Hermanus, "run away after the fifth bout."

"Flee!" called out Lancianus, anxiously. "Go! and Mercury be thy speed!"

Hermanus seemed not to hear this. He stood as straight as a healthy pine tree. How grateful he was in his heart that he had never shirked

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the exercises prescribed for him; his flesh was firm, his eye bright, his muscles flexible. The man before him was a wine drinker. Hermanus knew this by the look of his skin; and the passion for gambling had made his nerves irritable. There was no doubt of his strength. Casparus had a throb of pity, as he viewed the two; he did not hate this boy, and genuine regret for the most dastardly act he had ever done had begun to work in him. As he looked at this lad, he remembered the words of the little princess, who had said, pointing to the cross she wore,—

"I forgive you;—but oh, that you had sent me to my mother!" The pathos of the child's words came back to him, as he saw her brother, —the son of the man he had hated,—waiting, like a young tree, for the stroke of the lightning.

"Hermanus," he said, "go!—it is a foolish thing to sacrifice yourself for this tyrannical Roman,—the conquerer of your people! And tell your father that you met Casparus."

Hermanus half turned, still measuring his opponent with his eye.

"No," he answered. "I will try my strength

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with this man, that this young Roman may be saved."

"Is he your friend?"

"I know him not; but I have been taught by my mother, who believes in the new God, that all men in distress are my friends. You promise me the Roman."

"I do."

"But not his wealth!" said Armin, pointing to the jewelled belt.

"I care not for his wealth," said Hermanus.

"Fight then, boy," said Casparus, still pityingly. "But your blood be upon your head!"

"My name," said the wrestler, rubbing his wrists, "is Ufilas,—when thou enterest the abode of the dead,—as thou shalt in a few minutes,—'twere pity if thou couldst not tell the guardian of the shades who sent thee out of life."

Hermanus bowed his head, but still kept his eyes fixed upon his opponent. He had been taught that wisdom, not animal strength wins the battle. He guessed that the wrestler would, relying on the slenderness of his legs, try to throw him by lifting him bodily from the ground. He measured the muscles of Ufilas'

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strong arms with a careful eye; they stood out like knotted wires.

"Unknown God of my mother, help mè!" he prayed. Then he dug his toes deep into the earth. The face of the captive Roman flushed, and the vanquished wrestler rose, to stand against a tree. Ufilas caught Hermanus above the loins, and strove to raise him from the ground; but Hermanus, who had learned the theory of the art, knew how to make that force of nature which we call gravity, assist him. Though Ufilas strained, he could not move him. The vanquished wrestler laughed; it was pleasant to think that this stripling could resist the great Ufilas, his own only rival.

Hermanus thrust his toes deeper into the earth.

"The bird of strong claws is hard to kill," said the Roman, almost breathless with anxiety.

Hermanus remained on the defensive. Ufilas grasped at his arms, but Hermanus glided from him; Ufilas attempted again to seize him at the waist, but again Hermanus, whose eyes did not wander from the eyes of his enemy, avoided him. Casparus, adept in the wrestling art, wondered at the coolness of the youth.

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"He must fall," he muttered. "His head and toes are not a match for the strength of Ufilas."

"He will bite the dust," said Armin.

The wrestlers watched each other,—Ufilas with a wandering eye, Hermanus with a look as steady as a well pointed spear.

Ufilas made a quick spring, and Hermanus felt himself held as in a vice and pushed backward.

"O Castor! he is down!" cried Lancianus, trying with all his might to burst his bonds. "Thus vanquished is a soul worthy of the gods!"

Slowly Ufilas bent Hermanus backward; it seemed as if his spine must break, and his head soon touch the ground. A grin of triumph spread over the face of Ufilas. After all, this was child's play; he did not know how flexible wisely directed and constant exercise had made the body of the young Saxon.

"You want mercy?" Ufilas asked, laughing. His speech was accompanied by an almost imperceptible relaxation of his grasp; Hermanus had waited for this; he sprang forward, slid under the left arm of Ufilas, and grasped him on either side of his breast; Ufilas tried to lift him,

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but the feet and toes of Hermanus seemed part of the earth itself. Exasperated, Ufilas raised his left foot from the ground and stood on the ball of his right in order to free his body. This gave Hermanus his opportunity, he plunged with all his might against Ufilas, and fell with him to the ground. He was up again in a moment; but Ufilas lay in the dust with two ribs broken at the place where they join the spine.

"I die!" he groaned, "I cannot move."

"No," said Hermanus, between his quickly drawn breaths, "he will not die,—that stroke always breaks a rib or two. You should," he added, "have your men learn something about the bones of the human body, Casparus, before they wrestle. The Roman is mine!"

"The Roman is yours," said Casparus. "Unbind him, Armin."

Armin obeyed. Lancianus, unbound, stood up. Hermanus put on his tunic, and took the right hand of the youth in his. Lancianus would have taken his jewelled belt, but Hermanus made a sign, and he dropped it. As he was about to move away, Hermanus caught sight of the clasp Casparus wore.

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"It amazes me!" he exclaimed. "I could have sworn that were the clasp that belonged to my little sister Hermangilda."

Casparus said nothing; he pointed to the path.

When the two youths had passed out of sight, Casparus said to his men:

"We are robbers, not murderers,—and that Roman boy would have been of little use to us; it would have been hard to make any in Gaul or Germany buy the son of Marcus the Superb as a slave. Such ransom would be hard."

The men assented.

"We have his jewels," said Armin.

"That Hermanus was a brave lad," spoke the first wrestler.

"With a noble heart," said Casparus, "his mother's God, this wonderful Christ has worked strange ideas in him; his father looked like him, but he was never gentle."

"I would that I could learn the lines of the body," groaned Ufilas, "for this youth knows exactly where the weak points in a man's ribs lie!"

But, though the followers of Casparus pretended to accept his decision, though all despised

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him for it; and when the night came, they took counsel. And after that, as he lay in sleep, they bound him; so it came about that these faithless creatures sold him, helpless as he was, to the same slave dealers that had bought the little Princess Hermangilda; and these—it was a mere matter of business in those days,—sold him at a profit at Pompeii, while the girl was taken to Rome.

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II.

LANCIANUS was tall and straight and bronzed by long walks through the wide campania and delightful sails on the Tiber, in the barge his father had made for him. He had travelled much for a young Roman. He had been considered delicate in his younger days, and therefore his father had humored him. It was on one of his journeys that he had met the young German, Hermanus. As we know Hermanus had been kind to him, and Lancianus came of a family that cultivated gratitude, believing, as they did that it was the rarest of virtues, and, above all, to be held dear to patricians.

"The people are ungrateful," said Lancianus, one day as he and Hermanus were exercising their horses in the circular place reserved in the garden of Palatius, the father of Lancianus. "The low and the vulgar are ungrateful,—Jove, Hermanus, how well you ride!—I wonder if you can drive a chariot as well!"

"I?" said Hermanus, laughing, as he brought

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his fiery horse abreast of his companion's. "You shall see me some time. I had much practice at Pompeii, which is a beautiful city. Have you been there? There are those who say it will be sometime buried under burning lava or cinders from Vesuvius; but nobody believes it. I don't mind telling you, Lancianus, that I raced with the chariot men of the circus,—and won many times."

"You! And yet, though not a Roman, you are of noble blood?"

"My father is a prince among his people, and many noble families in Rome are indebted to him for kindnesses; therefore am I received into their houses, when I prefer them to yours which is not often."

"And you raced with the chariot men? How could you do it?"

By way of answer, Hermanus made his horse wheel so rapidly around the circle that his yellow hair, which he wore long and curly, streamed all about him like a halo in the sunlight. He jumped from his horse, threw the reins to a waiting slave, and, advancing to a little table, stretched himself on a couch beside it, and accepted some

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sherbet, cooled with mountain snow, from another slave.

"The wars among our tribes and the Roman taxes have made my father poor, and I was in need of a few hundred sesterces, and I won them. Beside, dear friend, does not our great Emperor Nero play with the actors in the theatre, and has he not won races ere this?"

"True," began Lancianus, who had followed his friend, "but my father says"—

"Hush!" said Hermanus, looking anxiously around. "Nero had spies everywhere. All Rome fear them. I thought I heard a rustle behind the couch."

"You are prudent," Lancianus said, "it ought to be a lesson to me. I talk without thinking. But why did you want money?"

"To buy a slave," said Hermanus.

"You buy a slave,—I have heard you say that a time will come when there will be no slaves, and that it is wrong"—

"Lancianus!" whispered Hermanus.

Lancianus colored. "Shall I ever learn to hold my tongue? We are alone. There is no one within earshot."

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"I can never feel safe in Rome. You know that my little sister, Hermangilda, was lost. I have told you the story too often with tears. You know, too, that, like Cadmus after his sister Europa, who was carried off by a white bull, I have sought for her. In vain,—in vain. At Pompeii I found the man who, hating my father, had carried away my sister. All just men have enemies, and this man was one of my father's. When I met him, he was a slave in Pompeii, sick, ill-treated; he knew nothing of my sister. He had sold her!"

"Did you kill him?" asked Lancianus. "I would have done it!"

"So would I at one time. But there had been among us Saxons a Christian preacher,—an old man. He said that God would bless only those that forgive. I loved his words. I despise your Pagan gods"—

"O Hermanus!" cried Lancianus, "Mercury hears you! Where is your prudence now?"

"You are right. Hermangilda was baptized in the new Faith, and so was my mother. It is all very beautiful, though I do not understand it. But I have sworn that," and he went close to his

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friend's ear, "if the God of the Christians gives me Hermangilda, I will be one of them!"

Lancianus started back in horror.

"Oh, Hermanus, what nonsense. You cannot mean it. These Christians are abominable creatures. The people in the streets say dreadful things about them. They eat little children. They may have eaten your sister!"

Hermanus rose, startled.

"The emperor hates them,—I heard on the 11th of the calendar of November[1] that he thought of exterminating them, wherever they can be found"—

"No," said Hermanus, "I will not believe it. These Christians are good. My mother is a Christian."

Lancianus sighed in pity. He had a true friendship for Hermanus.

"But about the vile slave,—I would have served him as I did Servus who lost my beautiful leopard. It was tame, and I loved it. Servus took him off one day and he escaped. I had him imprisoned, and the hair of his head pulled out; —and then he was lashed until he nearly died."

[1] Oct., 22, A. D. 56.

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"I bought my father's enemy and set him free. He was a very tall and strong man,—a robber. He has recovered his strength, for yesterday I saw him among the gladiators, and he saluted me. He is called Casparus here."

"Casparus! Well I know him; he seized me, and you set me free. And he has become famous! The emperor deigns to praise him for his alertness in the arena. If it were not for the emperor's favor, I should have him tortured till he returned my jewels; but the emperor's favor makes each thief a god! He will hate you and do you an ill turn. People of his class always do. They are vile,—these people. He will repay you in your own blood."

Hermanus laughed.

"Our Saxons are not like your Roman scum. And I care not,—if I have pleased the God of the Christians."

"You shock me, Hermanus. I know that few of our patricians believe in the gods;—for myself, I always say, 'Mercury be my speed,' when I am on a journey; but I shiver when I see those beastly priests of Isis go about our streets carrying the image of their Egyptian goddess. I

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don't know what I believe. My old schoolmaster said that the great Virgil, in his fifth eclogue, predicted the coming of one who would right all wrongs."

"I have heard so," said Hermanus, gravely. "Oh, Lancianus, how tired I am of Rome. I would that we could go to the country of my people. There is no deceit; these boys of our age have manly sports and lead pure lives. You alone, of all our companions, are true and good. If we could find Hermangilda and go to the green woods and the mountain streams and the cool air and the honest way of my own people, you, Lancianus, would be happy!"

"I am not happy, my mother who is proud, has left my father; and more than that," said Lancianus, taking his friend's arm, and walking up and down the platform. "My father has displeased Nero in some way, and every hour is filled with dread for fear the tyrant may murder or exile him.—Do you know I think that Servus has been listening to us? I saw him creep from behind the screen of African palms, near the fountain a moment ago. I believe he is a spy. I wish I had had him killed!

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And you will wish it of your Casparus after awhile."

"You should have made Servus your friend."

"One never makes an enemy a friend by forgiving him."

"What matter? You make a friend of the God of the Christians;—and that, I believe, is much."

"I know not the Christians, Hermanus, and I could not be a Christian for all the worlds we Romans have conquered. But sing to me. Get the hateful face of Servus out of my mind. Sing one of your German songs. In that, no spy can find harm."

Hermanus threw himself on a pile of tiger skins near the fountain, drew from his belt a long reed, silver-tipped, and fretted with gold. He played a slight prelude, then taking it from his lips, he sang,—

"Come, shepherd, have you seen my love
Among the meadow grass so green,
Where nodding flowers of golden sheen,
Raise smiling faces sweet above?

"She is a little girl so fair,
With eyes of blue and hair of gold,
And she has wandered here I'm told,
Where flowers are bright and rare.

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"O, shepherd, tell me, where is she,
She wears a hood of blue and white,
Her footsteps are so soft and light,—
In years she was but three!"

Hermanus played an interlude between each of the stanzas, which sounded like the warbling of birds.

"O shepherd, tell me if her smile
Shone like the sun"—

A slave interrupted the music. His face was pale. He had taken care of Lancianus when he was a small boy. To him Lancianus owed the precious leopard.

"O Lancianus," he said, "pardon me. The emperor has sent a messenger to Hermanus, saying that he must hold himself in readiness to drive a chariot in the games of the circus against the emperor himself. The great Nero has heard that they praise him at Pompeii, and, as he has vanquished all, he would vanquish him. And, Lancianus, your father is held prisoner by order of the emperor!"

Lancianus reeled forward. Hermanus and the slave hastened to support him.

"Oh, Hermanus, I know Servus has listened many times to our talks. My father must die."

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"Alas!" whispered the slave to Hermanus, "his father, the virtuous Marcus Palatius is sentenced to death for speaking ill of that son of the gods, that god himself, the emperor."

"You need not whisper," said Lancianus, in a faint voice. "I can hear it. But, O ye gods, how deaf you are! What can I do? I will kill Servus!"

"You will not," said Hermanus, gravely. "We will practice with the chariots until night comes. You cannot see your father; you know Nero's ways; this place is guarded,—is it not, Rotardus?"

"It is, my lord!"

"I knew it;—come, be a man, Lancianus. I will say this, Lancianus, your father shall live; he shall go with us to Germany."

"Would we were there!"

"I will say this before Rotardus, who is no spy,—I will save your father's life, and the God of the Christians, whom I have tried to please, will help me."

Lancianus turned away; his form shook with sobs; he was in despair; he did not know the God of the Christians.

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III.

NOT long after the end of the month of January, Marcus Palatius was condemned to death, and it was decreed that he should die on the fifth of the ides of February. Marcus was one of the haughtiest and sternest of the patricians. He despised the low vices of Nero, but his own pride was so colossal that it had almost become a proverb; and the people said when they wanted to express pride, "You are as haughty as the rich Marcus Palatius." He loved, above all things, his boy, Lancianus. His wife, Fulvia, as proud as he, had left him, taking with her the little daughter Vanusta. She had gone to her country house outside the city, where she lived among her books and flowers. Vanusta, separated from Lancianus, grew ill and sad. But Fulvia's pride would not let her ask a favor of the haughty Marcus, and so Vanusta faded away because of her separation from her beloved brother.

"No," she said, sternly, "the child shall die rather than that I shall ask a favor of the man

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whose pride urged him to speak harsh words to *me*."

In vain Vanusta's old nurse pleaded. At last, indignant, Fulvia stabbed the aged slave in the arm with a sharp bodkin. The old nurse ran away to staunch the blood. No more could be said; and the nurse, who took this wound as a matter of course,—for in the old pagan days masters had the power of life and death over their slaves, could only weep over little Vanusta's failing health in silence.

One day in the slave market Fulvia caught sight of a girl somewhat older than her own child. Her hair was golden, her eyes of the deepest blue, veiled with long lashes of black, and her sad but sweet face, almost startled Fulvia. She beckoned to an attendant.

"The girl?" she said, haughtily.

"A German."

"I would buy her; send her to my steward."

The dealer bowed humbly. "Her price, most noble Fulvia"—

At this moment the girl raised her eyes, full of the sadness of unshed tears, and looked frankly as few people dared to look, into the proud dark

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eyes of Fulvia. Involuntarily, the eyes of Fulvia softened; and the child rushed forward into the arms of the patrician lady. An attendant cried out angrily, and would have torn her away; but Fulvia made a haughty gesture.

"She is well-bred, noble lady,—evidently the child of some German prince; she has even been taught a few words of our tongue."

"O Mother!" whispered the girl in Latin. "O Mother!"

"I must have her; I will take her at once."

The dealer hesitated.

"I must tell you, noble lady, lest you blame me for it. She was taken by us from the agent of a band of robbers who often brings us our finest slaves. She is—it is a horrible thing for one so young,—a Christian."

Fulvia started, and looked into the face of the child.

"Ah?" she said. "Well, I care not,—but, of course, you will reduce her price. It is a risk to take a Christian into one's household. And what has she clasped in her hand?"

"A cross," said the man, "I could not get it from her only with such violence as would wound

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her, and that, as you know, might have injured her beauty and reduced her price still further."

"Poor child!" murmured Fulvia, "I shall soon take such nonsense from her mind. Let her come with me."

Fulvia took her into her own litter, and tried to make her talk; but Hermangilda knew only a few words of Latin; she could say,—"Pater" and "mater" and "frater,"—few other words. At home, Vanusta and the little slave became fast friends. Vanusta had a playmate now,—a very gentle and sweet playmate, and Fulvia was content. The cross, after all, was only a childish toy; she need not bother about it. And so the three sat on the sunny, marble terrace, among the roses; with the great white peacocks strutting about them, and the swan gliding on the lake below, while Vanusta taught the little girl how to play the lute and to speak in the Roman tongue. And Fulvia was never tired of the slave's songs. She said nothing about the cross, and as soon as the German spoke easily in Latin, she asked her many questions about the Christian religion. One day, as they sat on the terrace, Fulvia, with the Book of Jeremias in her

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hand, which, it was said, the philosopher Seneca had translated, since Fulvia had bought the manuscript at the sale of his library, the German girl sang,—

"O shepherd, tell me if her smile
Has ever shone upon your heart,
And made you gay for many a mile,
And bade all care depart?

"Say, tell me, have you seen the girl,—
That little girl who's only three,
My rose, my star, my lute, my pearl,
O shepherd, where is she?"

There was such sadness in the tone of the singer, that Vanusta burst into tears.

"'Tis a song made for me by Hermanus, my brother,—he promised to make another one. It makes me think of him, my dearest brother," said the little slave, weeping, too.

"And I, of Lancianus," said Vanusta.

"And I," said Fulvia to herself, "of Marcus and the boy. Nothing on earth satisfies me," she thought. "I hate these vile mongrel gods. This child says that her teachers tell her there is happiness in giving up pride for the Christ who died. I will give it up.—Your cross, child," she said aloud.

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Hermangilda, coloring a little drew the cross from her bosom. Fulvia looked at it, and then kissed it. Before she gave it back, she said:

"Child, if the chance comes, lead me to the Christian teachers. I am weary of everything; —I would be a Christian."

Fulvia spoke in her usual clear tone. She turned slowly, for there was some one near. It was Servus.

"Was it a Roman matron of the line that has furnished so many priests and vestals to the gods who spoke those words?"

"I, Fulvia, spoke them."

"I came to say that Marcus Palatius is condemned to death."

"Nero dare not!"

"Nero is emperor,—and a god!"

"And Lancianus."

"Lancianus has tried to see his father, and been refused. He is safe,—for a time," said Servus, with an evil look. "There dwells with us a young German whose powers as a driver of chariots is known to Nero. The magnanimous emperor loves to hear of such strong men, and he forgives Lancianus for being the son of his father

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because Hermanus had demanded it. He refuses him nothing, because the young German is obstinate and will not drive a chariot unless he chooses, and Nero is generous to him. But after the race, we shall see."

"Who speaks of Hermanus?" asked Hermangilda, dropping her lute.

Servus looked at her.

"Your slave is very like the German boy," he said.

"After the race? What race?" asked Fulvia. "I marvel, Servus, that after your foolish loss of my son's leopard you should come to me with this news."

"You were always kind to me, but severe," said Servus, "and I thought it would please you to know that the husband you have deserted and the son you love no more, are in danger."

"Please me, Servus!—no! I have changed."

"You love the Christians,—this slave is, I have heard, a Christian. I live only to please the godlike emperor."

"A spy!"

"You have said it,—a spy because the cruelty of you and your son drove me to it. I could not

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manage to hold the ferocious leopard; he broke his chain. He would yield to none but Lancianus. You hated me for the loss which I could not help,—and I can hate, too,—after the race? If Hermanus wins the race, Nero will be furious at being beaten; if he loses the race, he will have no more influence; he will be a toy cast aside, and then Lancianus must suffer for the crime of his father in speaking of what he called the vices of the god Nero."

"Oh, you unknown Christ, help me!" murmured Fulvia.

"Hermanus! Hermanus!" murmured Hermangilda. "He must be in Rome."

"He is,—do you know him? I must say that he is kind and gentle," said Servus. "He does not seem to think a man is an animal because he is a slave. But he will be killed all the same, if he dare to excel the godlike Nero in a chariot race. And, if he fail, the emperor may kill him for his impudence in trying to do what he could not do. The emperor is just!"

Hermangilda fell senseless against Vanusta, and the cross rolled across the marble directly to the feet of Servus.

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"Ah?" he said, smiling, "I see!"

"Tell my steward," said Fulvia, "to give you two hundred sesterces for your news. I hold it good, Servus, since it reunites me with Marcus. Go,—the child swoons."

"She was always generous," muttered Servus, "but proud and cruel. A Christian! The emperor will see that they are united in the same dungeon!"

And he went to demand the sesterces of the steward. "There is nothing," he said, "worth living for, except gold."

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IV.

NERO settled all things very quickly, when he heard the story of Servus. Fulvia was sent at once to a dungeon, with Vanusta and Hermangilda. So violent were Hermangilda's struggles to keep her cross, that it was decided that she should be torn by a wild beast in the arena. Nero, to punish both Fulvia and Marcus, ordered that they should see each other daily, for he thought that they still hated each other. But Fulvia was so meek and gentle, that Marcus was amazed.

"What has done this, O haughty one?" he asked.

"The teachings of Christ which I had from the German slave," she replied.

"If your Christ can work such a wonder, he must indeed be great," he said. And then Fulvia told him all she had learned. "Sorrow is good for a man," he said, "I, too, hate our gods. I am constrained to bow to this Christ."

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The games of the circus were announced throughout Rome, to take place on the day before Marcus Palatius was to die. The Romans cared only for bread and the games; and what games! A little child was to fight with a wild beast,—a Christian child, learned in magic and all evil things, it was said. A famous German charioteer was to race with the emperor. And, if he were foolish enough to win, all Rome knew that his blood would color the dust before night. And, if he lost, perhaps the emperor might force him to fight the beasts! Ah, yes, in any case, the German charioteer was doomed.

Hermanus knew this as well as anybody. But he was not afraid. He and Lancianus sat in the orange grove of the garden on the day before the games. Lancianus already wore the badge of mourning; his hair was disordered, his eyes red, his face white, and there were dark circles about his eyes. In vain the slaves offered him the violet-wreathed cup of orange sherbet.

"O Hermanus," he said, "to-morrow I lose all, —you,—for you must die, my father, and perhaps my mother and sister."

Hermanus, whose eyes were as bright and his

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hand as steady as usual, showed the muscle of his right arm.

"Friend," he said, "I am as steel,—no youth of nineteen in Rome is as strong as I. The God of the Christians and I against a hundred Neroes."

"But," said Lancianus, "I have something to tell you—I hate it with all my heart,—but I must tell it. You know the pretty song you sang the other day? I know it all,—you did not finish it,—Servus came, you know."

Hermanus looked up in surprise.

"You cannot know. I did not end it,—and as I made it for my dear Hermangilda, only you and she have ever heard it. I stopped at the line,—I remember it well, for every word speaks of her"—

> "O shepherd tell me if her smile
> Has ever shone upon your heart,
> And made you gay for many a mile,
> And bade all care depart?"

repeated Lancianus, gazing at his friend.

"The words! the very words. Where did you hear them?"

"Under the prison grating, where I went last

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night, hoping to see my father. A girl's voice, —sweet and low,—sang them."

"Hermangilda is in that prison. O Lancianus, O Lancianus, I must save her!"

"There is a panther or leopard in the vaults, —a wonderful beast brought lately into Rome, —a ferocious creature. But who comes here? This strong man with our slave, Orgun is Casparus the famous gladiator."

Hermanus' hand trembled, as he rose. Orgun the slave retired. Casparus, strong, burly, sullen-looking, advanced. His face lighted up as he saw Hermanus.

"Master!"

"Friend!" said Hermanus, gently. "I have just heard"—

"It is true. The child is to fight the leopard tomorrow."

"O God!" cried Hermanus, turning white. He covered his face with his hands. Casparus turned away.

"I hate Rome," said Casparus. "Since you have forgiven me, why should I not go home. Give me a chance to-morrow and I will seize the child and take her to your father."

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"How?" cried Lancianus. "How?"

"I know not,—my master must plan; I am but a fighter."

Hermanus took his hand.

"If I die to-morrow, know that I forgive you entirely, Casparus,—and save Hermangilda."

The gladiator grunted; but drew the back of his hand across his eyes. Then he left them.

"Your forgiveness has made him love you," said Lancianus, "would I had forgiven Servus."

"It has been hard, Lancianus. But, if this God of the Christians is as powerful as they say, He will not desert one who has striven to obey Him."

"What can He do?" cried Lancianus, wringing his hands. "Jove himself cannot help us now. Hermangilda to fight a leopard, my father and perhaps my mother to die; I safe only until you gratify Nero and the people by your racing. After that,—death to you and to me. If you succeed, Nero will kill you; if you fail, you will be compelled to fight the beasts."

Hermanus took his friend's hand.

"This great God rules even Nero."

"And my little sister, Vanusta! I know not where she is."

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Hermanus arranged the folds of his toga, and said, "*Vale*,[1] friend. I go to the emperor. I shall race if he promises me the lives of your father and mother and Hermangilda. Otherwise no torture will force me to touch a rein for the amusement of the people. I may die,—but if you and your parents live, I shall be sure that Hermangilda will be restored to my people. No,—do not detain me. I am free and the son of a prince! Your Nero is only a man. I do not fear him."

He was gone before Lancianus could grasp his arm.

"To death!" said Lancianus, throwing himself beside the fountain. "He goes to death! O God of the Christians, since they say you are so great, save him!"

Utterly wretched, Lancianus lay among the skins until a step near him told him that Hermanus had returned.

"I did not go;—but I found Casparus and sent my message. He has brought me this." And Hermanus gave his friend a tablet on which was written: "Nero to the insolent boy, Hermanus."

[1] Farewell.

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"The emperor grants your request. He will not disappoint the people or spoil your strength with the torture."

"Nothing more?" asked Lancianus.

"That is all."

"Nero will keep his promise only until after the race."

"If Nero does not return your parents and my sister to-night, I will not touch the reins. There is One greater than he to Whom I appeal!"

The dusk fell. The boys were silent, and Lancianus was hopeless. The scent of orange blossoms filled the air. The fountain's spray softly fell, and the boys did not heed. The night came, and Nero did not keep his promise. In the morning the games were to take place.

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V.

THE morning dawned, fair and bright. Lancianus and Hermanus were taken early to the circus, and there Hermanus flatly refused to enter a chariot until the prisoners were released. Nero was furious. He must, if he pleased Hermangilda, disappoint the people in the fight between the child and the leopard. If he tortured Hermanus, the boy would be useless in a race. If the boy still refused, there could be no chariot race. Nero, wild with anger, resolved to expose the whole group, Marcus, Fulvia, Vanusta, Lancianus, Hermangilda, and Hermanus to the beast. That might frighten the boy into accepting the challenge which he, the all-powerful Cæsar, had honored him with. Lancianus was pushed into the arena, to face the immense crowd that filled it. He walked in, erect and unmoved. The others were already there, pale and fearful, excepting Hermangilda, who, with a cry of delight, rushed into her brother's arms.

The patricians, accustomed as they were to

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Nero's atrocities, murmured among themselves. The spectacle of one of their number sacrificed in this manner shocked them and even angered the people. Whose turn would come next? The greatest of them gathered around Nero, and asked almost like slaves for the life of Marcus.

"I refuse," said Nero, "I will spare them on one condition,—that Hermanus will accept my challenge."

"Have you a plan?" whispered Casparus. "Trust me, master,—and my gladiators will obey me."

Hermanus did not answer; he felt that he could not trust Cæsar;—but what if he could force him to promise before all Rome?—he would not prove openly treacherous. Hermanus stepped toward the emperor's seat, guarded by Casparus, and, as he did so, Lancianus' face lighted up, and he tried to detain him; but Hermanus spoke aloud,—

"Cæsar," he said, "I come of a people who speak the truth. Casparus himself once spared two lives because he had given his word. Can the emperor do less than a gladiator? Will you promise before all Rome to set all my friends

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free and to let them live safe, if I accept your challenge?"

Anger seemed almost to choke Nero. This audacity drove him to fury.

"Impudent slave!" he cried, "you would wrest from me a promise? Ha! I promise that, if yonder leopard be as a lamb and refuse to tear you and the Christian child to pieces, I will send you all safe from Rome!" Then he laughed aloud.

"We must die," said Marcus. "Peace to you, Fulvia!"

"I promise," repeated Nero, "before all Rome. Slave, vile slave, to doubt the word of Cæsar!" And he laughed again; a few of the most servile echoed his laugh.

Lancianus' face glowed; he left his place beside his father and stood between Hermanus and Hermangilda.

"Ah," said Hermanus, "all looks dark; I fear —Casparus," he called out, "tell my father that I died well,—no, no, we shall not die," Casparus had been ordered to one of the entrances of the arena, and the group stood by itself, "tell the emperor, I will drive in the race, Casparus!"

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Casparus was too far away; he did not hear.

"Christ is with us, brother," said Hermangilda, her golden hair seeming, as it framed her face like the halo of a saint.

The great multitude was silent. Guards held Marcus and the others,—only Hermangilda was allowed to stand free. She, the tender child, was to fight the leopard first: after that, the others. Hermanus struggled in the strong hands that bound him, and implored Cæsar, in piercing tones, to let him enter the race; but Nero laughed in ecstatic enjoyment. Hermangilda smiled at her brother,—"Peace," she said, "God wills it!"

Lancianus, with a terrible effort, tore himself from the base Servus and the slaves of Nero, and stood beside Hermangilda.

"Death!" shrieked Nero. "Oh, yes, I will keep my promise! The leopard!"

The leopard came, swiftly, gracefully, terribly. And then, of a sudden, it was gentle.

"Your God has conquered!" whispered Lancianus, as the great black and yellow beast dashed forward and rubbed its head against its master. The leopard had found Lancianus.

"Cæsar's promise!" said the patricians.

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"Cæsar's promise," echoed the people, touched by the look of Fulvia and the bravery of Hermanus, the only being in Rome who had dared to face the emperor.

Nero rose, white with wrath, and looked about him.

"I keep it!" he said; he dared not break it in the presence of all Rome.

Casparus and his gladiators gathered around the group. In less than an hour Marcus and Fulvia were declared exiled. Casparus fled with them in disguise. Nero's wrath pursued them; but so careful and cunning was Casparus that only one of their party suffered from it. This was the leopard. One of Nero's agents, Servus, stabbed the kindly beast, as he left the circus. The leopard in return killed Servus with one blow, but the dagger had been poisoned,—so the poor beast was left, to the grief of Lancianus, to die in Rome.

In the German land, Lancianus married the Princess Hermangilda; Hermanus lived to be a priest, and to bless their marriage. Vanusta founded a famous convent in the Rhineland, where her father bought many acres; and Mar-

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cus and Fulvia, their pride subdued by their Christianity, lived very serenely. Casparus was forgiven by the Prince Herman, who, now that Hermangilda was restored, embraced the faith of his wife. It was hard for Casparus to become a Christian; but at last, through the persuasion of Lancianus and Hermanus, whom he greatly respected, he consented to be baptized.

"I have always found," said Hermanus, one day when our personages were together in the castle of Lancianus, "that knowledge is better than strength and that when a man does his best and trusts in God, He is sure to help him."

"It is true," said Lancianus.

Casparus thought a moment, and then he echoed, in his strong voice,—"It is true!"

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THE CHAINS THAT BIND THE WORLD.

I.

A TALK.

THE crops looked well;—green and yellow, with streaks of brown, covered the fields. But every farmer knew what it meant, and was not joyful. It had rained, rained, rained for many weeks, and beneath all this show of color there was nothing but rottenness.

Mary Gartland read in the newspaper that the incessant rain had ruined the crops in Bavaria, but she thought that it made no difference to her, and she was heartily glad that the crops were good in the United States for that meant to her and her sisters a trip to Europe in the spring. May had not been graduated from school yet, but she and Alice and Margaret had done so well that their father had promised them six months abroad, if matters were propitious.

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And so May, who always read the foreign news and editorials to her father every night, merely shrugged her shoulders. Mr. Gartland smiled.

"Too bad," he said, "but it will bring up the price of our corn. You needn't worry about the trip, May."

May laughed, and said,—

"You dear old papa!"

Alice and Margaret were pleased, too. They had made a great album of photographs of foreign places, and they were practicing French and German verbs with a will. They, too, smiled. Bavaria was so far off, and the failure of the crops there would only give them additional pleasure. Their mother, who was sewing at the table, shook her head.

"I would rather stay at home than profit by the misfortunes of others," she said. "I feel sure that no evil can happen to our brethren anywhere without its affecting us in some way. We are all 'bound by golden chains about the feet of God.'"

Mr. Gartland laughed.

"You always were sentimental, Peggy," he

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said. "I must say I am more glad that corn will go up in price than sorry for the Bavarians."

Mrs. Gartland sighed. "You do not realize what poverty means. I was once very poor myself, after my father's failure in business, and I know."

"What's the use of talking about that, mother," said May, rather pettishly. "I am awfully ashamed"—

"Awfully, May. I thought you prided yourself on your good English," said her mother.

"I was very much ashamed when you said before Laura Wells of all people!—the most conceited, snobbish thing in our school!—that you and grandmamma had often done your own washing. I could have sunk through the floor."

"I have never been ashamed of it, dear. And your grandmamma's roughened hands were more precious to me than if they had been loaded with diamonds."

"I was not at all ashamed," said Alice, hotly. "I thought it was a good lesson for Laura Wells, —she is always talking about her ancestors, who came over in the Mayflower. I'm sure they did their own washing."

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"Your mother is always right," said Mr. Gartland. May raised her head haughtily.

"In our position in life, we can't talk about such things; they are unpleasant. Why the other day, Laura Wells asked me if mamma hadn't made dresses before she married papa. I was that mortified!"

"Poor, tender violet?" said her father, smiling indulgently. He admired even the haughtiness of his eldest daughter.

"It is true, my dear," said Mrs. Gartland. "It is true,—and if I had not been skilful with my needle, my dear mother would have lacked many little comforts, and I," she added, with a smile, "might not have been able to wear the pretty pink dress in which your father first saw me as I was coming out of church."

May's cheeks flushed. She tapped her foot against the carpet.

"I *hate* poverty," she said, "I wish we had always been rich. And I think proper pride is a good thing."

"Self-respect, my dear, *is* a good thing,—but not pride. May, you ought to remember how poor Our Dear Lord was,—and I shall never be

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ashamed of that poverty which taught me so many lessons of patience, endurance, and gratitude."

Alice and Margaret dropped their photographs, and each pressed a cheek against their mother's. But May went out of the room. Her mother looked after her.

"Ah, poor May," she said, "she will have many lessons to learn—many. She is a good, sweet child, and after awhile she will get rid of these false notions."

Mrs. Gartland went on with her work, and Mr. Gartland who inconvenienced himself very often, to make home pleasant, read aloud the description of St. Mark's in Ruskins' "Stories of Venice," while the girls looked at the photographs.

May, in the meantime, sulked upstairs. She felt aggrieved. Why couldn't her mother be more like other people? It was just horrid, to have those old, hateful things talked of. Other girls' mothers probably had been poor, but they didn't talk about it. "I am always tender with the poor because I was poor myself," her mother often said. Such nonsense!—May her-

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self always found both the poor and poverty very disagreeable. "There was one consolation," she said to herself, "that the European trip was assured."

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II.

MAY'S PRIDE.

KARL shivered. His mother took her shawl and wrapped him closely in it.

"Ah, dear mother," he said, "I have never been warm since we left the little house. If father would come back and take me in his arms again, I should be warm. When shall we see father?"

Frau Wiener choked down a sob, as she led her little boy along the windy street. It was in February, and really cold and blustering. Karl looked very quaint and funny with his gold head and blue eyes above the dark blue shawl, and with its fringe dragging behind him, people turned to look at him and his mother. They had just come from the steamer, driven from their home by the failure of the crops. Karl, the father, had died of overwork and exposure in the fields, and his wife Gretchen and little Karl were left with almost nothing.

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But somehow Gretchen felt more hopeful every time she looked at Karl's curly head. Surely the dear child Jesus would help this little one! And so she took her little boy, and embarked on the cold, wide sea, trusting in God.

She could speak no English, and, after she had reached Boston, she became afraid for the first time. After all, she said, perhaps she and Karl had better have remained among the ruined crops at home than to have come among these strange people, who hurried so, who were not Christians—for she saw nowhere images of the dear Lord or the saints. It was Sunday, and yet the people hurried. She had been directed to a German boarding-house, and there she had left her mattress and her little box, so that she might go to Mass. She carried her basket, in which she kept her own shoes and Karl's when they did not wear them, for Gretchen looked on shoes as very precious. They were to be worn only on Sundays and in the town. In the country they were to be carried in the basket. After Mass, she would try to find work as a servant. Karl and she tramped on, Karl feeling very uncomfortable in his stiff shoes.

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"Oh, mother," he said, "I must take them off. They hurt!"

"But we are going to Mass," she said, "and we must be well dressed before Our Lord."

Karl hobbled along, and many eyes were turned to the poorly clad woman and the curly-headed little boy. The wind caught Gretchen's usually smooth locks and turned and twisted them in most unruly fashion. At last Gretchen caught sight of a gilded cross. She was heartily glad. Here were rest and hope at last. She gave Karl the holy water and piously crossed herself. The candles were lit for High Mass. She entered the beautiful vestibule. It was warm and bright with the soft glow from the stained windows.

"Oh, little mother," whispered little Karl, "let me take off my shoes. They hurt so!"

The church was empty, so Gretchen took off the little fellow's shoes and put them carefully into her basket.

"Oh, how good it is to be warm," he said, "and in God's house!"

Gretchen pressed him close to her heart. She looked at the red light before the Blessed Sacrament.

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"We are at home, Karl," she said, "we are at home as much as if we were in our own little house."

"Let us go in!"

Some people, in fine clothes, had entered. And Gretchen followed them. She had no fear. In the house of God poor and rich were alike. The pews puzzled her; there were no pews in the little church at home; she drew aside the soft red silk cord that hung there and walked into one. People passing up the aisle did not notice her. Remembering her basket, she hastily left Karl in the pew and put it under the bench in the vestibute. Karl was alarmed.

"Are you sure, little mother," he asked in a whisper, "that the good God will take care of my shoes?"

She did not answer; she had taken out her rosary, and had lost herself in prayer. She was in her Father's house. She began to be warm again. She did not shiver now, and poor little Karl raised his chubby hands and began to pray for his dear father with all his might.

Up the aisle,—by this time the Mass had begun,—came May Gartland, her schoolmate,

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Laura Wells. Behind them was Mr. Gartland. His wife and Margaret and Alice had gone to early Mass.

May was conscious of her well-fitting dress, her new hat, and her fashionable air; and Laura Wells had flattered her—by whispering as they entered, "Dear me! Quite respectable,—no poor people,—just like an Episcopalian church!"

Laura herself was an Episcopalian, and she had come with her Catholic friend just to have "a look at things."

May walked up the aisle with her head in the air. It was so lucky that all the pews were filled with well-dressed people. It was lucky, too, she thought, that those horrid dowdy Smiths who occupied the pew next to theirs, were not at church. Mr. Gartland had quietly slipped into the last pew; he had no desire to be disturbed by Laura's restlessness and questions. May made her most graceful genuflection, with her mind entirely taken up with Laura. As she rose, she caught sight of the woman with the old shawl, the tangled, wind blown flaxen hair and the shabby, little boy. They did not see her. Karl's little hands were clasped, his eyes fixed

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devoutly on the altar, and his mother had forgotten all earthly things.

May touched her on the shoulder.

"Will you please leave this pew?" she asked, in a sharp whisper. "People like you ought to go to early Mass."

"Fraulein!" exclaimed Gretchen, awakened from her vision of the angels.

May dropped into her German. She knew enough to give the command,—

"Leave at once. This seat is mine!"

Gretchen arose, bewildered. It was a new thing to be driven out of church. She drew Karl by the hand, and walked quickly down the aisle. Mr. Gartland, absorbed in his devotions, did not notice this.

Gretchen went into the vestibule; she picked up the prayer-book which Karl always liked to hold open in church,—it was his father's prayer-book,—and looked back into the beautiful church. Ah, surely, she thought, the people were not Christians in this country, though they had such a beautiful church; she sat for a few minutes on the bench; and then, fearful lest somebody should drive her away, she put on Karl's shoes,

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and, taking her basket, went out upon the front steps.

The wind whirled past her. Karl cried; he wanted to go back into the lovely warm church; he was cold.

"Be content, *mein liebchen*," she said, "we shall hear Mass here; the people within do not want us."

"But God wants us," Karl said, his teeth chattering, "I know he wants us. Let us not mind the people."

Gretchen shook her head. She wrapped the boy in her shawl, and knelt, saying her rosary, with the sharp wind cutting her like a knife until she heard the "Its Messa est." Then she could kneel no longer; she fell forward on the cold steps, fainting, and little Karl cried out for help with all his might. Mr. Gartland, being in the last pew, was the first to come to her.

"Poor creature!" he said, as she opened her eyes. "Why, she has a high fever!"

Gretchen seemed to be burning up and shivering both at once. Mr. Gartland lifted up her head and said to Karl,—

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"Don't cry, little boy. Your mother will be well soon!"

Karl did not understand the words, but he felt the kindness of the look, so he ceased to sob. May and Laura passed by.

"Papa is so queer," May said, "we'll just go on ahead. I suppose that woman has been drinking. Somebody ought to keep such people away from respectable churches. It's just awful!"

"We have a chapel for such people as that," said Laura, lifting the long-handled single eye-glass she used so constantly, and the possession of which May envied. "They never come near our church at all. Do you know," Laura continued, patronizingly, "I think if you would not let such a miscellaneous lot come to your churches, we'd come oftener just to hear the music."

May tried to feel grateful.

Mr. Gartland called a carriage and drove to a hospital. He could not understand Karl, and Gretchen could not tell where her boarding-house was.

The doctor at the hospital, who knew Mr.

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Gartland, said that Gretchen was very ill. "She has been exposed to the cold for some hours, and may have a fever." Then he dropped into German, speaking to Karl.

"The little boy says that a young lady drove him and his mother from the church, and that they had to kneel on the steps in the cold."

"Is it possible?" asked Mr. Gartland. "What is the matter with the woman?"

"Scarlet fever,—possibly; it looks like,—developed by exposure. But I can't tell yet."

"The Sisters will take care of her, and the boy. You may count on me for expenses."

When Mr. Gartland reached home,—he had walked slowly through the blustering wind,—he found May and Laura and Margaret and his wife in the parlor. Alice came in with a telephone message.

"The woman is worse, papa," she said. "Dr. West tells me to tell you so. He says that she probably would not have had the fever at all, if she had not taken such a bad chill."

"I am sorry," he said. "Her little boy will die of grief; he is a nice, frank-looking little fellow."

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"How could you be so awfully silly, you foolish papa," said May, with her eyes on Laura, "to take so much trouble about that untidy-looking woman? I had to ask her to leave our pew."

"You!" exclaimed Mr. Gartland, "you did that!"

"And very properly," said Laura, "the church was not a place for her."

Mr. Gartland did not notice this.

"May," he said, "I thought that your frivolity had touched only your head; I had no idea it had affected your heart. Go to the telephone, Alice, and tell Dr. West that I will call this afternoon, that it was my daughter who ordered that poor woman out into the cold, and, that, as I am responsible in a manner for her illness, he must spare no expense for her or the boy."

"Your father is *awful*," whispered Laura.

May blushed, and began to cry, and Mr. Gartland told the story to his wife.

"It is my duty to make all the amends I can," he said.

Mrs. Gartland for the first time in her life, spoke very sharply to May. That young lady went up to her room, and refused to come down

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to dinner. Laura looked as if she had been insulted, and pitied "poor, dear May," in a whisper.

The dinner was not as cheerful as usual. Mrs. Gartland was uneasy; her husband was silent; Alice and Margaret were as polite as possible to Laura, but they were not very fond of her, and they felt less so now because of her heartless chatter.

It seemed to Mrs. Gartland a real misfortune that her daughter should have been unkind to any poor person. And to think of having driven that woman and child out of church! Mrs. Gartland resolved to have a serious conversation with May. In the evening, when Laura had gone home, Mr. Gartland spoke little; he went several times to the telephone and made anxious inquiries.

"No better," he said, "worse, in fact. Oh, May, how could you have been so heartless?"

May pouted.

"There's one thing he will not do," she said to herself, "he will not take back his promise about the European trip, I'm sure of that, at any rate."

"The doctor told me this afternoon over the

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wire," Mrs. Gartland said, "that this poor woman was a Bavarian peasant driven over here by that failure of the crops May was reading about."

"Indeed?" said Mr. Gartland, languidly. "Do you know, Peggy, I am very tired to-night, and I have a sort of a headache."

May looked up from her book.

"Shall I play something for you?" she asked.

"No,—not to-night,—thank you," he said, coldly. May pouted again. The idea of making people uncomfortable about a wretched woman! What would Laura Wells think of the whole thing? And Alice and Margaret evidently felt that she had done wrong; she might have gone into the Smith pew and let the poor woman say her prayers in peace, they said. The idea!—was not the pew her property, as well as Alice and Margaret's? Having come to the conclusion that she was deeply injured, May went upstairs again, hastily said her prayers,—all the time wondering whether her father would choose to go by the Hamburg or Havre line of steamers,—and closed her eyes for the night.

On Monday morning, Mr. Gartland did not appear at breakfast. He was ill,—a slight fever.

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He was anxious about Gretchen Wiener and Karl. He seemed relieved when he found that the boy had been taken care of and that the woman was no worse.

The girls enjoyed the pleasure of waiting on their father; it was "so nice" to have him at home. Alice took in her pots of white hyacinths, Margaret made all sorts of dainties, and May hovered about. Her father was very gentle to her.

"You need sorrow, dear," he said, "to soften your heart. If we are a little hard through too much prosperity, sorrow always comes,—always."

On Wednesday, the doctor said that he was really ill; he had scarlet fever, and the girls, who never had the disease were forbidden to enter the room.

May went about the house sobbing.

"He caught it from that wretched woman," she cried. "Oh, why did he trouble himself about her?"

"If you had left her to say her prayers in peace," said Mrs. Gartland, sternly, "she would not have fainted on the steps, and he would not

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now be ill. In future, daughter, learn to respect poverty."

Days of anxiety succeeded.

Gretchen Wiener grew steadily better. One day little Karl was permitted to see her, and on that day the priest came out of Mr. Gartland's room, and said to his wife.

"God help you! It is over;—he passed away blessing you and the children;—and he was well prepared. You know he received the Holy Eucharist yesterday, and I had just given him absolution after confession to-day when he"—

May's wild cries rent the air. She could not be comforted.

"God's will be done!" Mrs. Gartland said. "God's will be done!"

After this, times changed for the Gartlands. They were obliged to move from their fine house; and Laura Wells ceased to know them. It required the greatest economy for Mrs. Gartland to live and educate the girls. She was in delicate health herself; and yet she could not bear to think of obliging one of them to neglect her education, to help in the household work. May had offered to stay at home; she had changed

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wonderfully; she was now as meek as she had formerly been arrogant.

"Sorrow has come, as father said," she often thought. "But, oh, if I could only have him back!"

They lived outside the city in a little house surrounded by a garden.

"If I only had somebody to help me, how bright I could make it," Mrs. Gartland said, one day in the spring, looking at the bursting buds. She was tempted to keep May at home, but that would mean that the girl should miss her chances of an education. "Ah," she said, "if I had only somebody to assist me, I could raise plants and flowers for the city market;—it would help so much!"

It seemed as if her thought was answered,—

"Lady," said a voice behind her, "Ach, dear lady, I have found you. I am well now, and I have been told all. Will you let me and my little Karl work for you?"

It was Gretchen, who had learned some English; and there was curly-headed Karl, in his stiff shoes, looking up at Mrs. Gartland with his frank blue eyes.

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Mrs. Gartland stooped to kiss him.

"So you are the little boy!"

Karl nodded as if he would never stop. He liked Mrs. Gartland's look. And so it was arranged that Gretchen and Karl should stay, and they made themselves very valuable.

You see that the failure of the crops in Bavaria did influence May Gartland's European trip.

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THE FIGHT AT SAWKINS'.

I.

"HOLD him down!" cried a voice from the lid of the coal box.

"Jump on him!" yelled the man behind the counter. "That's it!—belt him well! He's a thief!"

Three loungers who sat on a pile of coffee bags arose and helped to form a ring in the middle of the floor. From the centre of this there came a confused sound of blows and cries.

Hugh Delaney had just received his packages from the man behind the counter. He numbered them, as he put them into his basket. And he ran over in his mind the list of things he had promised to take home. There must be something he had forgotten, for they said at home he never remembered all he was sent to get.

"Ginger,—I knew I had forgotten something.

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Ten cents' worth of ginger, please," Hugh said. To think of his forgetting the ginger when there could be no ginger snaps without it!

Jeff Sawkins, the man behind the counter, did not answer. He was too busy watching the fight.

"Stop that!" he yelled. "Move off there!—you'll smash them tomato cans! Move off there,—if you don't want to break them cracker boxes!"

The group did not pay any attention to him, and Hugh, putting his basket on a barrel, went forward to see what was the matter. Two boys were pounding a small colored lad unmercifully with their fists. The lad, showing the whites of his eyes and howling, closed his right fist tightly; one of the boys struck it with all his might, while the other pummelled him with great force and rapidity.

"What's the matter?" asked Hugh, edging into the group.

"Can't you see?" asked one of the loungers, with a yawn. "They're only whipping that nigger."

The bigger of the boys at this moment jumped

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upon the body of the unfortunate little black fellow and used his heavy boots unmercifully.

"Give it up! I say!" the other cried, "give it up!"

But the negro held fast to the object in his hand, screaming with pain.

"Two to one!" said Hugh. "Two to one! You can't do that,—one of you must come off!"

"Haw! Haw! Haw!" laughed one of the loungers, whose family was starving at home, while he wasted his time talking politics in the grocery store. "Just hear little Hugh Delaney talk! Come up, midget, and see what you can do!"

Hugh's eyes flashed.

"If I were a man, like you, George Howe," he said, "I'd be ashamed to let two big boys hurt a little fellow, whether he was black or white."

The three loungers laughed all together at this. It did not occur to them that a black boy's injuries could be very severe. There was a tradition in Greenville that a locomotive almost at full speed and a colored boy's head had once come into collision, and that the boy's head had proved the harder of the two, and there were

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other similar stories going to show that nothing could hurt a colored person.

Hugh eyed the boys. They were bigger than he was. But he felt that he must interfere. He liked a fight, too. His father had told him that fighting was wrong, except in a good cause. And Father Redmond, in his instructions at school, had explained more clearly that a boy should never seek a quarrel, and that he should do all he could to keep out of a fight.

Hugh Delaney was a religious boy. Religion with him always came first, for he had been well taught at school—and at home. The thought flashed through his mind, should I have to tell it in confession, if I fought for this boy? Would it be right?

He was able to answer this at once. He threw off his jacket, seized the boy who was jumping on the negro and rolled over with him on the floor. The negro boy relieved of his burden rose quickly, with bleeding nose and mouth, and ran out the door—before the other boy could detain him.

Hugh and Sam Rodgers struggled together until a pyramid of cracker boxes and tomato

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cans toppled over upon them. Then Jeff Sawkins interfered, and dragged Hugh from under his larger antagonist.

The second boy had gone off, to wash his wounds,—the negro boy had scratched him freely,—at the pump. Hugh and his opponent stood opposite each other, panting, torn and bruised. Hugh's shirt was in rags, his suspenders hanging down, and a shoe had been torn off. Sam Rodgers was even in worse condition. George Howe held Sam, while Jeff Sawkins gripped Hugh by the shoulders.

"Let me go," said Hugh, "let me go, Mr. Sawkins,—I don't want to fight,—I've nothing against Sam Rodgers,—but I didn't want them to kill that little fellow. I'm afraid his leg is broken, as it is,—I heard it crack!"

"Haw! Haw! Haw!" laughed the loungers. The idea of hurting the colored boy seemed to be absurd.

Sam Rodgers did not struggle. To tell the truth, he had found Hugh's fists rather hard, and he was not anxious to enter into another fight. It is one thing to jump on a prostrate body, another to be jumped on by a body very much alive.

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"Lemme go," he said, pretending to be very anxious to get at Hugh, "I'll teach him." But he seemed as if afraid that he would be let go.

"Sam," said Hugh, stepping up to him, "let us shake hands. I'm sorry I hurt you, but it *had* to be done. I couldn't see you half killing Mink Sable without interfering,—as it is you've lamed the boy; and if you've done that, his poor old mother will starve,—that's all!"

Sam took Hugh's hand sheepishly.

"The old woman won't starve, I reckon," Jeff Sawkins said. "Darkies have one more life than a cat. Mink Sable is a thief. He had a five dollar gold piece in his hand, dated away back before the war. He must have stolen it somewhere. He dropped it, and the boys made up their minds to get it away from him, and return it to its rightful owner,—if they could find him."

"I don't believe that Mink stole it,—Mink is too fond of Miss Clare to steal," said Hugh.

"Darkies ain't fond of anybody; they're just cattle," said Jeff Sawkins. "Come, boys, I'll treat you all to cider. I didn't think you had so much pluck in you, Hugh Delaney,—why you

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fought like a little wild-cat. And you're not generally considered quarrelsome."

"I hope not," said Hugh.

"But what'll your pa say to the way you have been tattered and torn? My! he'll make a row!"

"He would make a row, if he should hear that I stood by and let two big boys lame a little one. Have an orange, Sam?"

Sam sulkily declined the orange, but took Mr. Sawkins' cider; and Hugh gathered up his parcels and started for home.

He was bruised; his clothes were torn; but he had two consolations; his father would not doubt his word,—and the ginger for the snaps was safe. He trudged along, while the loungers at Sawkins' store talked over the affair as if it had been the battle of Chancellorsville. They and Sam Rodgers drank more hard cider than was good for them, and they went homeward in the dusk talking over a plan which, had they not drunk so much, would not have occurred to them. They bore no malice against Hugh; but they had all expected to share in spending Mink Sable's five dollar gold piece,—for coin was scarce

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at this time in Greenville, and it was valued accordingly. They hungered and thirsted after money. They would not work; they had the habit of idleness,—in fact, each of them had come to the pass when they would rather commit a crime than work; and they took Sam Rodgers into their confidence.

They walked along the hedge of cherry trees and lilacs, just beginning to show signs of life. Here and there the yellow jessamine gleamed out of the darkness among last year's leaves. The evening air was soft and sweet-smelling and the western sky hung with rosy and purple clouds, with here and there a patch of light green.

But these four never thought of the beautiful things, made by God, which silently asked them to think of Him.

They had been reading in the store a novel in paper covers, called "The Road Agents of Prairie Pass." It was bad; it was untrue; it was thrilling, and Sam Rodgers and George Howe and the others had read and reread it until they knew it almost by heart. It showed how a boy had become head of a band of train wreck-

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ers, forced the passengers to give up their money, and gradually became a millionaire living in a gorgeous palace and in possession of all luxuries. This wicked and foolish story had seized upon their imaginations, and, going home in the twilight, they talked about it as if it were real.

"I tell you what," said George Howe, "I tell you what, boys, we'll make a haul this very night. This isn't Prairie Pass,—the trains don't run so quickly through the Greenville Cut as they did there, and perhaps nobody *might* be killed,—at Prairie Pass, you remember, nobody was ever killed because the soft marsh was on either side of the track,—but we can't help it. I've got to have money;—I want lots of fun, and I will not work for money."

"It's getting dark," said the second lounger, Ned Coverdale, "suppose we sit here and talk it over. The 10:30 train goes through our Cut, and it's filled with lots of rich people on their way to Washington."

"You mean to throw the train off the track?" asked Sam, frightened. "Somebody might be killed!"

"Well," said George Howe, "drop the thing,

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if you're afraid. If I had asked Reddy Smith, who ran off when Hugh Delaney showed his fists, he'd be ready enough to join in. If anybody is killed, we can't help it. We'll just take all the money we can, and make tracks,—that's all!"

After this, they talked in whispers, sitting in a hollow, in front of a thick hedge of lilacs.

"Listen!" said Howe, suddenly. "I heard a moan!"

They were silent.

"It's the wind rising," answered Sam Rodgers. "There it is again!"

"It's the wind," said Ned Coverdale, impatiently. "You said that we'd drag out the old cart from old Mammy Sable's yard and fill it with rocks. Go on!—it is getting late;—we can't loose much more time."

They talked in whispers. The stars came out. Many people, mothers, fathers, little children, were in the Limited hastening on to Washington. They were all anxious to reach their destination, and most of them thought with joy of the dear ones waiting for them. They did not dream of what might meet them at Greenville Cut.

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II.

GREENVILLE, in Virginia, had suffered much from the war. All the white people in it and near it were poor now. And the poorest of them, though nobody would have thought so, was Miss Clare Ferrand. She lived alone in a great, old house; she had plently of ancient furniture, and a beautiful horse, Black Jack.

Mink Sable's mother had, in better days, been her nurse; and although suffering from rheumatism, she sometimes came over from her little cabin to see how her dear Miss Clare was. Mink's real name was John Napoleon, but, for some reason or other, he was known as Mink. As Miss Clare was not a Catholic, old Mammy's Mink had not been well instructed, but the old woman, who had come from Woodstock, Md., was very devout.

"That's *my* Miss Clare!" Mink always said, proudly.

On the morning of the fight at Sawkins', Miss Clare had heard that old Mammy was very ill.

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She had gone to the cabin, and found that this was true. But she found, too, that the old woman was suffering from the lack of good food.

Miss Clare's parents and all her relatives were dead, with the exception of her mother's brother, Colonel Gillespie. The plantation brought in no income since the war; it had been seized by creditors, and Miss Clare knew that the old house was not hers; it, too, would soon be taken by people to whom her father had owed money. For a month, her uncle, who had recently gone to Richmond, had promised to visit her and perhaps to help her. She knew that he was rich, that he had a houseful of children in the North, —but this was all. She hoped and prayed that he might come; but he did not.

She had only one piece of money in the world, —keepsake which had been given to her when she was a child. It was a five dollar gold piece which had lain among a pile of confederate notes ever since she had been a little girl. When she saw that poor old Mammy could not eat the salt pork or even the mutton and chicken she had sent, she made a list of things needed,—tea, fruit, jelly and

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wine. Then she gave Mink her keepsake, having kissed it once or twice, for her father had given it to her. She knew that he would not have let old Mammy suffer.

She went back to her room, knowing that she had not a cent in the world. Her father and mother had cherished her tenderly; she had been their pet, and here she was alone in the world and penniless.

She looked out and felt cheered by the coming of spring.

"God is good," she said, "I must cast off the gloom. Mammy is always praying that I may be a Catholic. I wish I were,—almost! I am so lonely, and that religion seems to have so much comfort in it."

She sat for awhile by the window singing Cardinal Newman's beautiful hymn:

"Lead, kindly light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead thou me home?"

She put on her riding habit,—a relic of her former luxury, and ran down to the stable to see her dear Black Jack. He raised his head and put his nose on her shoulder. She saddled him

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for a canter around the neglected lawn. Then she dismounted to tighten the girth. She walked slowly, leading him, out to the road.

"If Colonel Gillespie does not come to-night," she thought, "I must give up. I suppose," and the tears came into her eyes, "that I shall have to sell Black Jack,—dear, old Jack!"

A boy stopped to look at her; he thought that she looked like one of the ladies in the story books. She smiled at him; it was Hugh Delaney. He bowed in return, and, drawing from his pocket two russet apples, he offered them to her. She thanked him.

"If you happen to see John Napoleon, will you send him to me?" she asked.

"Oh, you mean Mink? Certainly," Hugh said, touching his cap. He found Mink, who gratefully took the five dollar gold piece from her, and went to buy the things on the list. Miss Clare gave an apple to Black Jack, not dreaming that her five dollar gold piece was to get Mink into trouble. We know that it did, for it was the cause of the fight at Sawkins' grocery store.

Miss Clare determined to spend the day in the open air; she took a flask of coffee and some

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bread and cheese and started for a long canter over the hills.

After sundown, as she was returning, she saw Hugh Delaney standing at her gate. At first, she thought it might be Colonel Gillespie with some good news. When she got nearer, she saw that the figure was that of Hugh. She sighed; after all, he might come yet in a later train.

"If you please, Miss Clare," said Hugh, setting down his basket, "I came this way to tell you that Mink is hurt. He hasn't any friend but you,—so I thought I'd let you know. And then I know, too, that he does a lot of things for you, and thought perhaps you'd let me help. I could catch a chicken for you, or look after your beautiful horse."

"Mink hurt!" said Miss Clare, alarmed. Hugh told her the story of the fight and his part in it.

"And so you, a white boy, went in to help poor little Mink,—may God bless you!" said Miss Clare. "I gave him the money; he did not steal it. When Tilly, who helps about the place, comes, I'll send over to Mammy's, to ask after Mink."

"Can't I do anything for you?" asked Hugh,

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shyly. "Mother always says, 'Hugh, do anything you can for Miss Clare,—she's so nice, I hope she'll be a Catholic.'"

"And that's the greatest good your mother can wish me!"

"It *is* the greatest good," said Hugh. "I'm sure I think I should have died when my little brother went to heaven, if I hadn't known that he was with the little Jesus and the Blessed Mother. It's awful to think of little babies in cold graves and no Blessed Mother to look after them. The new minister laughed when I told him that;—but I didn't mind,—little children must have a mother even in heaven."

Miss Clare said nothing. Hugh's face was brown and somewhat saucy when he was not serious; he was not at all like the little preachers she had read about in the "Sabbath" school books. She wished she had something to give this boy as a sign of her gratitude for his defence of Mink.

"You would like to ride Black Jack?" she asked.

Hugh's eyes sparkled.

"Oh, yes, I would!"

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"Well,—here is the other key of the stable. You can take him out every day at seven o'clock, if you like. And I shall be obliged to you,—for he wants more exercise than I give him."

Clare nodded. Hugh took his basket and started into the grove of magnolia trees on his way home. The sun had left a bright reflection in the sky; it was light still, but he knew it would be dark before he reached home.

At home, he found his father and mother and his three little sisters waiting for him. He told his story, and, as he expected, his father, who had been a Confederate soldier, slapped him on the back.

"Good boy!" he said, "you must always take the part of the weak,—and never mind, if you do get a scratch or two."

Hugh was very proud of this.

"Fighting is wrong, my dear," his mother said, "but I'm sure you couldn't have stood still and seen the child's leg broken. And, when you have had your supper, you had better run over to see how Mink is."

Hugh went over toward old Mammy's cottage about nine o'clock, after his chores were

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done. He was whistling merrily to himself passing the lilac hedge, when a voice called his name.

He found Mink lying among the dry oak leaves behind the hedge.

"I'se afraid I'm a gone coon dis time," said Mink, "my ankle hurts so dreffu l;—but it's all right when I keep still. You mustn't mind me till you do it."

"Do what?" said Hugh.

"Save the 10:30 train from being destructioned," said Mink, showing the whites of his eyes. He told Hugh that, having dragged himself to this place, he could get no farther. There he lay while the loungers and Sam Rodgers had made their plot. He had almost betrayed himself by his moans, but he heard what they had said.

"I'll go to the Cut and see"—

"No," said Mink, "they'll be there. It is a lonely place,—as black at night between the rocks, as a crow's wing. Oh, my ankle,—I'se a goner, sure!"

"Good-bye, Mink," Hugh said. "I'll be back as soon as I can!"

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"If they find you spying at them, they'll kill you, sure!" called out Mink.

Hugh believed this. Ten minutes' walk brought him to the top of the ledge that overlooked the Cut. He crawled along the rough rocks and looked down. He could hear low voices in the Cut, which was a narrow space between the rocks through which a single track went.

He waited. The moon was behind a cloud. He waited, and at last a ray of silvery light showed him a cart filled with stones drawn directly across the track. The criminals had disappeared among the low bushes. They expected to wait, too.

Hugh, being a country boy, did not need a watch. He saw by the signs about him that it was after nine o'clock,—perhaps half-past. It would take perhaps an hour to get his father and some other men together. In an hour the 10:30 train would be due!

It would be hopeless to think of trying to wave a lantern or to warn the engineer;—the men below would soon stop that. If he had a horse, he could reach the telegraph station in time to stop the train, without a horse,—and a fast horse.

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How could men be so wicked. He shuddered. He could think of nothing; but he said the Hail Mary over and over again.

A horse!—where could he get a horse?

Suddenly he turned and went softly to the path that led to Miss Clare's stable. It was not far. The key turned in the door as if it were oiled. He patted Black Jack; he whispered into his ear; he saddled him;—and in five minutes Black Jack and he were galloping swiftly through the woods to the station.

Hugh thought of all sorts of delays. If Black Jack should drop a shoe,—if he should put his foot into a rabbit hole,—if a hanging branch should drag him—Hugh—from the saddle,—if the train should be ahead of time,—if it were later than he thought,—then there would be a great pile of the dying and the dead at the Cut for Sam Rodgers and his friends to rob! To think that Sam Rodgers could do such an evil thing! It seemed impossible!

In spite of his fears, he enjoyed the ride. How easily Black Jack galloped! And the horse liked it, too. He had had a taste of exercise that day, and he wanted more.

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There was a white light on the track. Hugh could see it from the road. The train was coming. He was too late! But no!—it turned. It was the freight train on the branch road to Belton Hill.

Black Jack's hoofs hit the soft earth regularly.

"Good horse! good horse!" he whispered. "Ho, Jack,—ho, good Jack!"

Jack seemed to understand. Hugh heard the town clock strike ten o'clock. He laid his head close to the horse's mane for fear of the overhanging branches, and let the reins hang loose.

Suppose the telegraph operator should not be at his post. But he was!—Hugh saw the light in the window. He lost it again as Black Jack plunged between two hills.

"Ho, good Jack!" he murmured.

A few minutes afterward, he had delivered his message to the amazed telegrapher. The instrument clicked, and the conductor got the warning at the next station ahead. And so the Washington train was saved—through Hugh and Mink, and it came about because of the fight at Sawkins'.

That train brought Colonel Gillespie, who res-

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cued Miss Clare's old home, and took her and Black Jack to a great city with him. He was very grateful to Hugh and Mink, and so was the railroad company.

Hugh received a good sum of money which enabled him to go to college for four years. Mink and his mother were put in charge of Miss Clare's house, where they lived comfortably.

Sam Rodgers and his evil companions were sent to the penitentiary for twenty years each. And when Miss Clare became a Catholic later, she said that it was because Hugh had made her think of a Mother in heaven.

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THE NOVENA.

I.

IN GREENE'S COURT.

FOR really good children, everybody in Third street said,—that is, in Third street between Chestnut and Pine,—there were no children like the Evanses. There were two Evanses,—Mary and David Watson. Mary wrote a beautiful hand and it was a fine thing to see "David W. Evans,"—named after his grandfather,—put his name at the end of a page in his copy-book.

The Evans children came out on their front steps after the sun had "gone away" on summer days and sat there, dressed in their Sunday clothes. Mary was a pretty little girl of thirteen years of age. David was fourteen; but his white trousers and her starched frills were just as clean and neat as if they had been worn by young people of twenty. The Evanses lived with their aunt; they were orphans, and they owned the

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little red brick house with white window shutters and white stone steps in which they lived, and several other houses besides.

Their aunt was a very mild old woman, but she taught them to think a great deal of themselves. They knew they were good, and they were so proud of it that they scarcely ever spoke to anybody. Mary practiced her scales on the old piano,—made away back in the century for the Duc de Reichstadt,—and David read a great deal in the vacation time. Once Timothy O'Leary, a small boy who lived in a court near, offered David three sour balls and a large red fire cracker, but Mary said,—

"You go away, you nasty boy!"

David often spoke of this. It had occurred on the Fourth of July of the previous year. He often debated with his sister whether he might not have taken the "shooting" cracker,—it was the largest he had ever seen,—but Mary said no. "The O'Learys lived in a court or some kind of a little street, and it wouldn't do even to speak to any of them."

There was no doubt that the O'Leary children admired Mary. They all went to the same

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church. The four O'Leary girls thought Mary was "just lovely" when she walked up the aisle of the church, in her crisp lawn frock and big leghorn hat, on Sunday mornings in summer. Tim O'Leary said he had "no use" for David Evans since his refusal of the "shooting" cracker. He said he was a "sissy" and made faces at the Evanses when they passed.

"Oh, dear," Kate O'Leary sighed, "I wish we knew some Catholic girls. If Mary Evans were not so stuck up, I am sure I could like her!"

"But she *is* stuck up. She won't speak to us just because we live in a court and wear cheap clothes," Annie, her sister, said. "And we can't help it. I should like to know her," added Annie, frankly, "because she has such nice books, and she might lend us some."

The O'Learys' mother was dead. Their father worked all day in a warehouse in Front street; it was a hard struggle for him to keep them at school. The girls, from Kate, who was fourteen, studying hard to be a teacher, to Clara, who was seven years of age, did their best to help. Tim had been promised a place in the district telegraph service during vacation.

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It happened, however, that Mr. O'Leary, who had lent his savings to an acquaintance, found himself obliged to take a small farm in the Neck for the debt.

The Neck at this time was the great space below the city, stretching between the Delaware and the Schuylkill rivers. It was covered with "truck" farms; but this happened to be in a shaded and pleasant part of the plain. There were four goats, an old horse, an ancient stable, and a good frame house,—all going with the farm.

When Mr. O'Leary came home on the second day of July and told the children that they were to move "down into the Neck" for the summer, Tim was delighted. He asked his father if he could not work on the farm, instead of going into the telegraph service. His father said,—"he'd see about it." The girls were not so well pleased. The Neck had no charms for them. They looked upon it as an ill-smelling place, muddy, and with ponds in it, in which there were frogs and in which boys were sometimes drowned.

Still, the little street was very hot and dusty, especially on this July evening.

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"I saw the Evanses going to the ice-cream saloon with their aunt and a new boy," said Clara. "I wish *we* could have ice cream,—it's so hot."

"After awhile,—after awhile," said Kate. "Father will give us everything by and by."

"Will you teach school and buy me a hat like Mary Evans?" asked Clara.

"The truth is," Mr. O'Leary said to Kate, who was his chief adviser, "I shall be glad to get the children out of the city. They feel that they are poor, and they almost envy all the advantages those Evans children have. If the Evanses were not Catholics and they did not see them at church, I suppose they would not care so much. I wish I could do more, Kate, for the children,—but we must live in this court until we get richer. If your mother had lived, she would perhaps have found a way of making the little ones happier."

Tears came into Kate's eyes as she noticed the lines of care in her father's face and the threadbare coat, which was his best.

"All for us," she said to herself, "he never thinks of himself. I do wish we did not have to go into the Neck."

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Mr. O'Leary looked sad.

"It must be, Kate. The friend to whom I lent all I had saved, has failed. I must take the farm or nothing,—besides, my health is breaking,—the owner of the warehouse advises me to rest for a month, as work is slack. If we go to the Neck, we shall save the rent of this house, and the children will have something to talk about. They are getting envious of those Evanses."

Kate sighed. There was to be a little play on the Fourth of July at the school. Annie had been asked to take part, and Kate had counted on buying her a new frock. That must be given up now. No money could be spared.

After Mr. O'Leary had gone to bed and little Clara had been tucked away, Tim and the three girls sat in the front room, to talk over matters.

Annie had begun to cry. Nobody could see her, for it was too warm to have a lamp in the room.

"Oh, dear," she said, "it is so dreadful to be poor. I hate it! The Neck is *vile*,—that's all about it. I'll ask father to let me go into a store and earn some money. There's no use in

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trying to get an education and suffering as we do!"

"The education will give you the pleasure of helping father by and by," Kate said. "It is hard enough to live here and be looked down on just because we live in a court and father works in a warehouse, but we ought to try to be cheerful."

"I'm glad we're going. The Neck is a jolly place. I can catch frogs by the dozen. Did you ever eat frog legs? Do you know, girls, we may sell enough cabbages to buy a piano and a new frock for Annie, and" —

"I don't want a new frock, if I can't have it for the play, and Kate has just told me that I couldn't have a new hat. I can't take my part, —that's all."

Annie and Benita were twins. Benita was thoughtful and silent.

"Prayer brings things right," she said, and they listened because she spoke so seldom. "There is nothing like prayer. I shall begin a novena to the Blessed Virgin to-night, and you'll see that a time will come when we'll be glad we tried to like going to the Neck because father" —

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"Never!" said Annie.

"It will be very hard," said Kate, "very hard, —dear me, how happy those Evanses are, in their nice, cool house,—Mary is playing 'The Shepherd's Evening Song' on the piano now."

Annie wept silently. It was so dreadful to be poor,—to want to play music, to want to read so much, to want so many things for those dearest to her! Prayer might be all right, but—

"Yes," Tim broke in, "I believe in prayer; I *know* there is nothing like it."

The girls were silent. They knew that their brother was religious at heart, but they did not expect him to talk about it.

"Well," said Annie, "it doesn't do some people much good. I went to church this afternoon, to make a visit. Mary Evans was coming out, with a strange boy. She had the loveliest bunch of roses, and she dropped two. As they were so beautiful, I picked them up, and said, 'you've lost your roses.' She took them, just seeming to see me. 'You might have given them to her,' I heard the boy say,—he's a red-headed, bright-looking little fellow,—and she said, 'It's only Annie O'Leary,—one of the children out of the

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court,—she wouldn't appreciate them. Oh, I'd just like to *kill* her!"

And Annie began to cry again.

"She's a peacock!" cried Tim. "I'll punch her brother's head when I see him next time! Don't cry, Annie, I'll give him the nicest black eye you ever saw. Is the new boy short and stout, and does he grin?"

"Yes," said Annie.

"I know him. Miss Evans is his aunt, and he is from the West. We raced against each other for three squares to-day. He's a brick,—he gave me six jackstones and ten agates for my old knife. I know him."

Benita began her novena before she went to bed. The girls had heavy hearts. It was bad enough to live in Greene's Court, but worse to go into the Neck.

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II.

IN THE NECK.

THE O'Learys did not know as they sat in their little parlor that the Evanses were talking of them. Mary sat in the darkened room playing one of her pieces. David was listening, and hoping that his cousin, Bert Browne, was impressed by Mary's music. Bert had arrived a few days before on a visit to his Aunt Mary Ann. He had come from Illinois, and both Mary and David were anxious to show the young savage how well educated they were.

When Mary had finished her piece, which she had played with a few false notes, and with many airs and graces, Bert spoke,—

"Don't you know any boys and girls?" he asked. "Do you always live this way by yourselves?"

"Auntie does not like us to play with the children in the neighborhood," said Mary. "We never do it."

"How funny!" said Bert. "At home we play

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with everybody that is not bad. Are the boys all bad about here? If they are, the East must be awfully bad. At home we're always reading of murders and things that happen in Philadelphia."

"And cyclones and robberies in Illinois," answered Mary, promptly. "*I* should be afraid to live in the West. I should be afraid to live in Chicago."

"I wish I lived in Chicago," retorted Bert. "But I don't. Our town is one hundred miles from the greatest city in the world"—

David laughed scornfully out of the darkness.

"Why, I don't believe you ever saw a piano till you came here!" Mary said.

"Didn't I? Didn't I?" exclaimed Bert, indignant. "I've seen more than you ever set your eyes on. You call that old music-box a piano. We would not give it house-room."

David and Mary did not answer. They respected and esteemed their grandmother's piano as if it were an old friend.

Bert was seized with regret after he had spoken.

"Oh, it's good enough for the East, where you

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like your pianos old; but we like new things out West. I saw some nice-looking children to-day. There was a good-natured boy who spoke to me, and a nice girl,—the one at church"—

"Oh, the O'Learys!" said Mary, drumming with her fingers on the insulted piano. "We do not know them, nor do we wish to know them."

"Why?" asked Bert. "They go to our church, and they look jolly."

"They live in Greene's Court," answered Mary.

"Well, what of that?"

"Oh, he can't understand," said David. "I'll tell you what we'll do to-morrow, Bert, we'll cut out flowers out of tissue paper for auntie's birthday."

"All right," said Bert, "I'm willing to learn, but I'd rather have some fun. Isn't there anywhere to go? That O'Leary boy was saying something about the Neck. Where's the Neck? He said there were cat-tails there and frogs."

"The Neck is muddy. We never go there," said Mary.

"There are no cat-tails now," said David.

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"There are in the Fall. People shoot reed-birds there. Auntie said I might walk down and see it, but I have never wanted to."

"You mustn't think of such a thing, it is out of the question. Shall I play more?"

"No," said Bert, crossly, "I'd rather hear about the O'Learys. Or sing something. Let's sing 'He's a Jolly Good Fellow!'"

"No," said Mary. "The neighbors would hear us."

"I'm not ashamed of my singing," answered Bert, indignantly. "And if they can stand that old rattle-trap of a music-box, they won't have fits when I sing."

The young people did not part in the best humor that night, although Mary tried to explain her objections to the O'Learys.

"You don't like 'em because they wear poor clothes, is that it? Why, I wear patches on my pants at home!"

"Auntie says we mustn't say pants,—it's trousers."

"You'd be mobbed in our town, if you asked for trousers. 'Pants' is good enough for me!"

"*Is*n't he horrid?" whispered Mary.

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"I'm just horrid enough not to like stuck-up people," said Bert, "and I should like to know how you would like to be treated as you treated that girl yesterday, in front of a church, too. I say it's pride. If you had a new hat and good clothes and she looked down on you, I guess you'd cry!"

At this moment, Aunt Mary called out that it was time to go to bed.

Benita prayed with all her might that good might come out of the evil of going to the Neck. She felt sure that good *would* come. To the girls the little house in Greene's Court seemed very pleasant as they thought of leaving it for an unknown place. As for Tim, he was delighted. He could now swim when he wanted to; he could fish from the old Point House wharf. He could take his father's old musket, —the war was not so long past at this time.

Benita said that she knew that her prayer would be answered. Annie, with blazing eyes, said that she knew the Evanses would despise them more, if they, (the Evanses,) knew that they, (the O'Learys,) were going to live in the Neck.

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"Oh, I wish I could get even with them! I wish I could see *them* in old clothes! Wouldn't I laugh?" exclaimed Tim. "I've found out the new boy's name. He's their cousin. His name is Bert. He's a good fellow—nothing stuck-up about *him*."

The day for moving came. Annie arranged so that the wagon containing their small belongings should not pass the house of the Evanses. But, to her mortification, the driver misunderstood her, and the load of furniture was drawn along Third street, with the old rocking chair—its back was broken—in plain view, and David and Mary were at the window! And the worst of all was, Annie saw them laugh. She almost hated them for a moment.

The O'Learys were agreeably surprised by the house in the Neck. It was larger than they had supposed. It was near a pretty part of the Delaware river, and well shaded. All about it were immense beds of old-fashioned flowers, the clover pink, the sweet william, mignonette, red and white daisies, scarlet sage, pansies of all kinds, and red and white roses. They were set in borders of box-wood. They had not been planted

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for show, but to be cut and sold in the market. There was nearly a half acre, now one mass of bloom.

Benita smiled when she saw all this. She began another novena that they might be content here.

"I wish it wasn't a sin to pray that we could make those hateful Evanses *feel* that we're better than they are."

"That would be wrong," said Benita. "Let us pray for them."

"I don't believe even a novena would bring down their pride," said Kate.

The young people were all very busy now. Annie, Benita and Tim cut great bunches of flowers on Wednesdays and Saturdays, and took them into market. It was delightful to bring the money back. Kate soon arranged the house inside. There was not much furniture to arrange, but the white muslin curtains, the flowers everywhere, the neatness, and the large size of the room gave the place an air of elegance. Mr. O'Leary and a man he was obliged to hire looked after the farm, with some help from Tim.

"I believe," said Tim to his father, who

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seemed less pale and worried, "that Benita's prayers have been answered. We are happier."

Mr. O'Leary said a prayer of thanksgiving, as he noted the lovely masses of ox-heart cherries among the dark green of the trees. The change to the Neck could no longer be looked on as a misfortune.

* * * * *

In September, when the reeds in the shallow places by the river had great tassels of seeds upon them, and the bob-o-links from New England were gorging themselves with the seed, the children were ready to go back to school. But they were happier and healthier and even wealthier. On the day before school opened, Bert persuaded Mary and David Evans to let him take a boat for a row. They agreed, for Aunt Mary had not forbidden it. In her wildest dreams, she had never thought such a thing possible. But Mary thought the great episode of a boat-ride would be a fine thing to talk about at school. And Bert had grown so tired of the house and the paper flowers, that he was glad to do anything.

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Bert hired the boat, and on a quiet afternoon the three entered it at one of the lower wharves. Mary began to wish that she had asked Aunt Mary, but Aunt Mary was out visiting for the day.

The river was not crowded with vessels, and Bert kept close to the shore. Mary and David were afraid at first, but Bert's belief in himself and the pleasant motion of the boat reassured them.

They had gone some distance. They were now opposite green banks, on which the bushes were turning red and yellow and brown. The line of wharves had disappeared. Mary was steering, and they were all talking when a big coal barge swept very near them. Mary dropped the rudder-ropes and screamed. Bert rowed with all his might; happily, the boat turned away from the barge, and ran, bow forward, against the bank, through a great mass of reeds. Mary, David and Bert fell into the water. They were up to their knees in mud and the boat lay on its side in the shallow.

Bert, as he wiped the mud out of his eyes, laughed aloud. David had fallen on his hands

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and then touched his face with them. He was tatooed with soft, black lumps of slimy ooze. Mary's leghorn hat had floated away, and her lawn frock was wet, limp and muddy. The boys helped her to solid ground. She could not keep the tears back, and they made tracks down her muddy face. Bert was wet through, but he did not seem to mind it. He tied the boat to a stump, took the oars, and looked about for a house.

"Carry one of these oars," he said to David. "There's a comfortable looking house among those cherry-trees."

Each of the boys took an oar, and, with Mary crying between them, went up the box-trimmed path and between great beds of scarlet sage, mignonette, and late roses to the wide porch of the house.

"By golly!" said Tim O'Leary, who was on the porch, mending a fishing rod; "come here, Kate, look at those creatures from the ark. Did you ever see anything so funny?"

Kate looked, and she was obliged to turn her face away. Tim burst into a laugh, and ran away to hide it. And Annie coming out on the

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porch looked at the three with a smile on her face.

"It's those horrid O'Learys," said Mary to Bert. "I'll die before I'll go into their house; but they can't live in that nice place."

Mary stopped short, and the water dripping from her frock made a puddle on the gravel walk.

But Benita hurried down to her.

"Come in," she said, "you must put on dry clothes—all of you!"

"Why, it's the Evanses!" said Tim, laughing still more, as he peeped from a corner of the house. He ran forward, and took the boys to his room. Mr. O'Leary at once sent the hired man into the city to say that the young people would be at their aunt's in a few hours. He did not say that they would have to wait until their clothes should dry.

Kate prepared a nice supper of biscuits, cream, cottage cheese, and preserved pears. Bert nearly choked when he saw that Tim had managed to lend him his Sunday clothes, while David wore the patched "pants" he despised. Mary looked very well in Kate's best white frock.

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When the clothes were dried and the young people ready to be taken home in a neighbor's Germantown carriage,—Mr. O'Leary promised to take care of the hired boat—Mary timidly kissed Benita on the cheek.

"You have been very kind," she said; "shall you come to the city again?"

"To-morrow," said Benita.

"To the same place?"

"Yes," said Benita, "to the old house."

"I should like to go to see you, and to take you some of my books," said Mary, "you have been so kind."

"You wouldn't come to Greene's Court," said Annie, rather rudely.

"It makes no difference where one lives, if one is kind," said Mary, blushing.

"I'm glad you've found that out," whispered Bert.

David, in his clothes dried and ironed by Kate, looked much subdued. He shook hands all around, and asked everybody to come to hear his sister play.

"Well," said Annie, when they had gone, "the Evanses are not so bad after all."

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"It s all come of Benita's novena! I always wanted to like them, and I wanted them to like us every time I saw them at church."

"The O'Learys are the *nicest* people," said Mary to her aunt. "I'm glad we shall be friends!"

Bert chuckled, and consented to stay all winter if he could go to school with Tim O'Leary. And it all came about through the novena.

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IN THE TIME OF LAFAYETTE.

I.

EARLY IN THE NIGHT.

It was a terrible night. Not terrible because of storm, not terrible because of the lightning or the wind or the rain, but terrible because of the wickedness of men.

The whole city of Paris seemed to have gone mad. Persons who had been kindly enough, who had little children of their own, and dear old grandfathers and grandmothers, watched the carts go by that held old people on their way to have their heads cut off by the instrument called the guillotine. And those who saw all this, who applauded it, had suddenly become cruel because they had turned their backs on God.

Little children were homeless and without food because they happened to be the children of aristocrats; and the people of Paris hated aristocrats. Formerly, it had been honorable to wear

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fine clothes in the streets, to drive in carriages, but now men tried to dress as poorly as possible; they were hurried to the guillotine because they had borne the title of Marquis or Count, and for no other reason. The aristocrats had been haughty and arrogant, and neglected the poor; many of them had shown a most evil example, and now the seed sown was bearing fruit. Louis XIV. the "sun king" of France, had been careless of the poor, Louis XV. had been evil in his life, Louis XVI. was alive now in prison, suffering for the sins of his forefathers. And his son, the little Dauphin, in prison, too, was to die by a slow and horrible torture, worse than death itself.

Not long before this night, the beautiful Princess de Lambelle, the dear friend of the imprisoned Queen Marie Antoinette, had been dragged through the streets,—and afterward, her golden head had been carried through the same streets on a pike. Not very long before, too, Mademoiselle de Sombreuil had been forced to save her aged father from the guillotine. How? By drinking in the presence of a group of men whose hands were red, a cup of blood! They

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said that she afterward went mad,—but she saved her father for the time. All this is very horrible,—too horrible to talk about; I mention it that you may know that human nature is capable of the most terribe atrocities, if it turns away from God and mocks at Him.

It was a terrible night, over a hundred years ago, when Hugh O'Regan and Henry Bache met in the streets of Paris. Hugh was the most wretched of boys,—for he had just lost his mother, and Henry was even more wretched for he had lost both father and mother, and, beside, he could say no prayers, for he knew none.

Louis XVI., now imprisoned by his people, had been kind to Americans. He had sent his troops over here to help George Washington in the great struggle against the tyranny of the English King George. And he had received Benjamin Franklin well at his court, and given him all the help he could. It was through Mr. Franklin that young Bache and his parents had come to Paris from Philadelphia. They had been the guests of the good Marquise de Lafayette, wife of the celebrated Marquis; she had learned with great sorrow that the Baches were of that fashionable

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school of infidels who had done so much harm in France.

Hugh O'Regan was about the same age as young Bache. His grandfather, the Count O'Regan, had served under Dillon in the Irish Brigade, and he and his mother had come to Paris to live in this grandfather's house while he went to the Jesuits' school. Early in the evening, he had left his mother, to go for some bread and fruit, as all their servants had deserted them. He had left, singing cheerfully the song she loved,—

"I leave thee my heart,
For all my heart is thine,
Time can never part,
When love and love entwine."

When he returned, she was gone. He found a piece of white paper on the floor, on which was scrawled in charcoal,—"I have been arrested. Trust in God. We, shall at best, meet in Heaven. *Je te laisse mon cœur!*"

About the same time, Henry Bache had followed a crowd who were singing and dancing. He was fifteen years old, and his curiosity must be forgiven. When he returned to the house in which his parents had lodged since Lafayette had

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left Paris, they were gone. He ran through the deserted house until he found a servant hidden in a closet.

"The citizens had taken the aristocrats to the guillotine," the servant said, as well as Henry could understand, for he did not know French well; "and he had better run or they would cut off his head, too."

And so, on this terrible night, when the streets of Paris resounded with shouts and vile songs, and torches flared everywhere, and men and women and children, with red caps on their heads, danced and sang songs in honor of Liberty, these two boys stood on the corner of a street, knowing not which way to turn.

Hugh wore a black velvet suit, with fine lace at the sleeves and neck. His silver buckles flashed in the light of a fire that had been kindled in the square, about which the people danced, singing a song they called the Carmagnole. And the other lines of his mother's song passed miserably through his mind,—

"I leave my heart behind,
'Twill never be well again,
For all the chains that bind
Are broken,—so farewell."

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His hair, long and curly, fell on his shoulders. A light sword, a gift from his grandfather, hung by his side. He was large for his age, and, at home in Ireland, so noted had he been in all athletic exercises, that he was rather too proud of his strength. He held his three-cornered hat in his right hand and looked at the dancers. Only a moment before, he heard it said, that they had almost torn an aged priest to pieces, who had been on his way to a bed of sickness.

Henry Bache, who stood near him watching the hideous dance, was slighter than Hugh. Baseball had not been invented in America, but he could ride a pony with anybody, toss quoits, and he had even tried his skill at quintain—an old-fashioned form of polo, which had been revived at Mr. Robert Morris' place near Philadelphia. He wore a plain suit of linsey-woolsey; his hair was cropped short under a broad-brimmed straw hat. He had no buckles on his shoes and no sword. His blue eyes had lost their usual look of keenness and interest; they were full of pain and anxiety. Hugh noticed him; he saw at once that he was not a French boy.

The dance became faster and faster. The

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torches flared; the light and shadows made the faces of the people under the red caps more wicked than ever.

"Ca ira! ca ira!" they howled.

"Tigers!" said Henry Bache, half aloud. Hugh heard him. A little boy had fallen in making his way through the crowd. His father, who wore the red cap, held him in his arms and kissed him. Even the red cap could not change the look of love on the father's face, as he consoled the little boy. Hugh saw Bache nervously clasp his hands together, in the red light. Hugh was impulsive; he touched Henry gently on the shoulder. Henry started; but a glance at Hugh's honest eyes reassured him,—besides, that Hugh wanted to be friendly was evident from the low bow he made. The plain American almost smiled as he saw it. It reminded him of the airs and graces of some French officers who had danced in a minuet at Mr. Robert Morris' grand house, and at whom the citizens had greatly laughed.

"You speak English," Hugh said, in his soft voice, "and you are in trouble."

"And you are Irish," said Henry, holding out

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his hand, "and" with a quick look at his face, "and are in trouble."

"Alas, yes," answered Hugh, in that soft tone and accent which betrayed his nationality, "I am very sad, and I know not what to do."

"And I am even sadder," said Henry, drawn to this boy by the sense of his loneliness. One who spoke his language seemed like a friend. "I am most wretched. My father and mother have been taken away by these demons who pretend they love liberty. Liberty means a different thing over in our country. *We* did not hurt women, or murder, or sing and dance like fools for liberty. We fought like men. Why, even old Parson Duché, who wanted General Washington to betray the cause, was not hurt. Oh, that we were home again!"

"We would fight in Ireland, if we could," said Hugh, who, grave and sad, looked much older than he was. "We are not permitted to know what freedom is,—but," he added, brightening, "we helped you Americans. My cousin Arthur Barry, was in the war."

"There were many," said Henry, "of your country. And might I ask your name?"

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"The Count Hugh O'Regan."

"Count?" whispered Henry, looking around. "They would kill you, if they heard you say that. Many persons are guillotined every day simply because they bear titles."

"I am what I am," said Hugh, proudly. "We were in Brittany when these horrors broke out, but my mother hastened hither, believing she could save my grandfather's house, which was in the charge of servants, and put me quietly to school. I had been only two days with the good Abbé Gaillard when—but what is that?"

What seemed to be a black bundle on the ground outside the circle of dancers moved and stood erect. A man, hideous in face, rushed at it, and beat it to the stones. It fell with a groan.

Hugh half drew his sword. "Stop," Henry Bache said, "if you fight you are lost. And I must ask you to help me, though I know not how. I have lost my father and mother, and I must save them!"

"And I, my mother; you must help me, too."

Henry felt a strange sense of consolation in thus recognizing a fellow in misfortune.

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"Done!" he said, striking his hand into Hugh's, and feeling better. "Done!"

Hugh was silent; he rested his eyes on the dark object which seemed crawling out of the circle of flickering red light. From above the black cloak showed a white head; the figure half rose to its feet. And, then, as the torches of the dancers flared up for a moment, he knew the face.

"Mother of God, help us!" he whispered, clutching Henry's arm. "'Tis Father Gaillard, —the wretches have almost killed him!"

Henry looked, too.

"A Papist priest," he said, bitterly. "Let him alone. He is as bad as the rest."

Hugh took his hand from his companion's arm.

"We must part, sir," he said, "I am but a boy; but I will save that priest or die. You can go your way."

"You will be murdered!" cried Bache.

"Perhaps so,—'tis in a good cause,—that old man is not only a priest, but my friend!"

Hugh was about to rush forward. Bache held him in his strong, wiry clutch.

"Stay,—he has reached the shadow of the tree. No,—I spoke hastily. You promised to

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help me, and I will not desert you,—even if I must risk my life for a Romish priest."

Hugh's face was flushed, his eyes blazed. Bache was cool,—"as cool" he afterward said, "as a cucumber." He drew a long-bladed pocket knife from his pocket, while he held fast to Hugh's arm with his right hand.

"If we go forward, we shall attract attention to the old man. Wait,—a moment,—let me think! I tell you," he said, as Hugh struggled, "that you are a fool! Wait! I will help you; and no American breaks his word!"

Gerald stood still, his eyes fixed on the figure that now lay in the shadow of the trees. It was plain to him that his companion was right. Some soldiers had joined the dancing ring, and two drums lay on the ground, cast there hastily, —for there was no order among the soldiers in those days.

"I will draw them around me," said Bache, struck by a sudden thought.

"God help us!" ejaculated Hugh.

"You will run to the right, in to the Faubourg; at the first corner is my lodging; it was an inn, and there is a sign hanging above the door. Go

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in,—Jacques the servant has run away long ago. And now for it! How do you say, 'I am an American?'" asked Bache.

"*Je suis Americain!*"

"Now," whispered Bache, growing very pale, and setting his teeth, "go to yon old man; but I expect you to help *me* to the death."

"We never break our word!" answered Hugh, creeping through the shadows toward the tree.

Henry Bache breathed hard. Then he sprang forward, like a deer, jumped on the big drum, and seized the little one. Rat-tat,—rat-tat,—rat-tat,—rat-tat!

The dancing-circle half stopped for a moment, but some continued to howl and sing. Henry rattled his drum again.

"Je suis Americain!" he called out, in a shrill, high voice. "Yankee Doodle." And then he crowed with all the strength of his lungs.

"Vive l'Amerique!" cried the soldiers. And Henry began in a high voice the song "Yankee Doodle."

In an instant he was surrounded by a laughing, shouting crowd. He rattled away on his drum, and cried, looking toward Hugh,—

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"Run,—for your life!"

Then he began to sing. To make him stand higher, the soldiers brought him an empty wine cask. Some of them had been in America, too, evidently, for, when he sang "Yankee Doodle," with many gestures with his drum sticks, they joined in the chorus.

There was nobody to watch Hugh and Father Gaillard now; everybody gathered about the "savage American boy" on the cask. Even the little lad who had been hurt laughed, as Henry crowed at the end of each stanza.

But suddenly there was a howl; a soldier had caught sight of Hugh and the priest. Henry became aware of this. He jumped from his perch, and reached Hugh's side just in time to strike back the arm of the soldier with his clasp-knife. The boy and the priest vanished in the darkness. Henry faced the soldier, who made a movement to grasp him. Henry threw the drum at his face and ran.

"*Je suis Americain!*" he said.

"Aristocrat! Aristocrat! Hang him!" called the soldier;—but Henry had disappeared.

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II.

AT NINE O'CLOCK.

THE dancers of the Carmagnole soon returned to their places. Ah, what a droll, savage American boy! they said. And some of them listened to the stories told by the soldier, who had been in America, of the strange barbarous manners of the country. And the old priest had escaped;—what of it?—to-morrow he would die, they said. All priests must be killed by good citizens sooner or later.

When Henry crept into the doorway of his lodging-house, he was dripping with perspiration. It was not that he had run so fast, but that he had been afraid,—terribly afraid even when he seemed boldest. He believed that if he lost his life, his father and mother might be lost, and this was enough to make him afraid of death.

He found Hugh and the Abbé Gaillard in one of the bedrooms of the deserted house. Hugh had got a candle, and, as few boys, then, were ever without tinder and flint,—there were no

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matches,—he easily made a light. The old priest sat in an armchair; he was very white, and a cut in his forehead was bandaged with Hugh's handkerchief.

They both started, as they heard Henry's footsteps. As he entered, the old priest held out his thin hand.

"Ah, my brave boy!" he said, "I thank you, —you have saved our lives. And Hugh knows how grateful I am since I have with me the Blessed Sacrament."

Henry bowed; he did not fully comprehend.

"Monsieur," said Hugh, gravely. "I promise you that your father and mother shall be saved. You know not what you have done, but you have brought a great blessing on yourself to-night. I promise!"

Henry was silent. Then he took Hugh's hand.

"As sure," he said, "as my name is Henry Bache, if what you say turns out to be true,—if your God saves my parents, I will worship Him, —I will have your old priest tell me how to do it. I like his face."

"But he is a Jesuit," said Hugh, looking straight into Henry's face.

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Henry hesitated. "Well, I have been told,—but never mind,—he must be good since he has been evilly treated by those fiends. And he is a brave man. Now you must help me find my father and mother."

Father Gaillard had listened; he understood English sufficiently to get at what Henry was saying.

"His father and mother?" he asked of Hugh. "What says he of his father and mother?"

"They are in prison."

"In what prison?"

"He does not know."

"Oh, I do not know!" said Henry, tears coming into his eyes. "And I shall go mad, if I do not find them; yet I know not, as a stranger, where to begin. If I could only speak the language well."

The priest raised himself on his elbow, with an effort.

"You are English?"

"No," said the boy. "I am an American," he added, proudly. "My name is Henry Bache."

"American,—Bache," said the priest, "Bache, —Bache." He tried it again to get the pronun-

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ciation. "Ah, I remember. Your father and mother are with Madame O'Regan, in the Conciergerie. It was madame who sent me by a trusted servant a note, telling me that she and two Americans had been thrust into prison. She told me also of a dying nun in the same prison. To her I was going, when the mob, God forgive them! recognized me."

Henry went toward the door.

"I must go," he said, "to find this prison. You are safe. There is wine in the cupboard, and bread and meat downstairs. I will leave you the key. The landlord will never come back. He was guillotined yesterday for harboring an aristocrat."

"You must not go," said Hugh. "It means death. We must consult."

"I will not wait," said Bache. "They will die of pain without me."

"You can do no good," spoke the priest. "When this pain abates so that I can walk, I will go to the prison."

"No," said Henry, in a low voice, "I must go. You promised," he said, turning to Hugh, "that your God would save them."

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"I am sure," said Hugh, "that God will not let me break my word." And he turned to the priest.

Father Gaillard smiled gently, and his lips moved in prayer.

"Oh, Father," said Hugh, the weight of grief getting heavier on his heart, "I *must* go, too,—I *must*, I *must*,—think of my dear mother among those demons. I will, at least, die with her."

Henry took his hand again.

"Let us go!"

Father Gaillard saw that he could not keep them, and he felt a faintness creeping over him.

"Kneel!" he said.

Hugh drew Bache to his knees with him. And then the old priest blessed them both. Hugh rushed up to him and kissed him on both cheeks, and Henry hastily brought wine and bread, and put them, with the key, on the table within reach of the Abbé.

The boys went downstairs together.

"The old man's blessing did me good,—though my father would laugh over it with his friend, Mr. Tom Paine," said Henry. "I don't care if he is a Jesuit, he is a good man. But—what shall I call you?"

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"Hugh,—that's my name."

"Well, Hugh you must put on some of my clothes. You had better not go out again with those clothes. They are too fine for these times. You are an aristocrat; they will recognize you as a—what do they call it?"

He thanked Henry. In a few minutes, he had dressed himself in a suit of coarse brown cloth, put on a round cap, and carefully laid his ruffles and sword aside. Henry gave him a stout stick, and they went into the street. The Abbé waved his hand to them.

"God will reward Hugh's faith," he said, sinking back into his chair. "Oh, if I could walk!"

He did not lock the door of the room. The boys might return, pursued, and all must be open to them.

Surely two boys never started out to do a more hopeless thing. The Conciergerie, as the prison was called, was doubly guarded. They had no friends, and at any moment they might on some pretext be arrested and guillotined. At this time neither women nor children were spared.

"I feel," said Hugh, as they went on, "that only God can help us. I shall say the Litany of

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the Blessed Virgin as I go along. *She* went to look for the Infant Lord when he was lost, and we have lost our parents. She has felt our sorrow; she can understand us."

Henry said nothing; but when they had walked on in silence for a time, he spoke,—

"If I knew a prayer, I would say it."

"Say, 'Son of God, help us!'"

Henry repeated it reverently.

"Now," said Hugh, we must leave the rest to Him.

They were passing some official house. A crowd of howling women ran down the steps, singing a blasphemous song. One of them stopped, and insisted on pinning two stained rosettes on the jackets of the boys.

"Let them be," said Henry, as Hugh was about to tear his off. "They are red, white and blue."

They passed a group of men on a corner. Hugh asked them the way to the prison.

"Ah," said the man, who had too much wine, pointing out the direction. "You will be just in time, if you want to join the condemned. Robespierre has ordered that a great crowd of

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the prisoners shall he guillotined by moonlight. Hurry! It seems to me, citizens," he said, turning to his friends, "that if this goes on there will be none of us left."

The boys could not speak; their hearts were like lead. They passed another group drinking in front of a tavern. These men were in their red shirts,—for the night had grown hot,—and these were open at the throat. One of them drew his hand across his neck as the boys passed.

"The guillotine will work to-night well."

"And," said another voice, in a lower tone, "perhaps Robespierre may fall himself."

"Cheer up," Hugh said.

"I cannot," said Henry, "oh, I wish we were home! How different it is out in the quiet streets of Philadelphia. To think that perhaps *they* will never see the beautiful Delaware or the green fields about again. Oh, why did we come?"

"It is fair in Heaven,—in our own land," said Hugh softly.

"But my father and mother do not believe in Heaven," said Henry, in agony. "I wish they did,—I wish they did. It must be," his voice

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choked, "it must be *awful* to die without hope,—and they do not know whether I am alive or dead!"

"Henry," said Hugh, earnestly, "I will tell them,—no matter if all the dirty red caps in creation stop the way. Faith, I will!"

They had reached the prison. There was a waiting crowd in front of it, silent, not rejoicing as was usual with the crowds that waited the condemned to be brought out. The heat was intense. The month was Thermidor—as the Revolutionists called it,—between July and August. The air was still.

Slowly a heavy cart came out of the frowning gates. And just then a quarter to nine o'clock struck.

The cart heavily moved onward. The faces of all the condemned could be plainly seen. There was no need of torches. The moon was full and silvery. Hugh felt Henry Bache clutch his arm.

"*There!*"

Hugh looked. He saw his mother's face, calm, serene, smiling at him; she held her rosary in her hand. Leaning against her was a weep-

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ing woman; and near this woman stood a man, pale, horror-stricken. Hugh knew at once that this was Henry's father. They were on their way to death.

"You promised,—you *promised*," whispered Henry. "God cannot save them now!" He seemed frozen to the spot. His father did not see him, and his mother's face was hidden.

Hugh was a strong boy. He thrust right and left with his stick,—and perhaps the rosette on his jacket saved him from being knocked down at once. He made his way, however, thinking of nothing but the faces before him; he sprang upon the cart, and clung to its side.

"Hugh, God bless you!" And he felt his mother's arms around his neck.

"Monsieur," he said to the wild-eyed man. "Henry is living; he prays for you,—see!"

Henry's eyes met his father's, and a great sob rose from the man's throat. Strong hands tried to tear Hugh from his mother; he clung to her, and Mr. Bache to him.

"Henry is alive!" he said again, and Mrs. Bache raised her pale, agonized face to see her son whom the people held back.

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"You promised!" shrieked Henry, above the noise, "*you promised!*"

"Don't you see," Hugh cried, frantically, as the guards threw him to the ground, "these people are Americans,—my mother is an Irish woman!"

"Aristocrats!" said the guards.

"Let me die with them!" cried Henry, jumping, bleeding as he was, on the wheel.

"I *will* die, too;—but, O Mother of God, I *promised!*" cried Hugh.

The tumbril stopped; it was impeded by the crowd ahead; there had arisen a sudden commotion in advance,—but the groups about the condemned prisoners were sullenly silent. A pale man, who stood near the car, muttered,—

"Are whole families to be thus slaughtered?"

"We have had enough of it," murmured his companion.

"Leave me! Leave me!" whispered Mrs. Bache to Hugh. "And, oh, my boy, turn to God,—this kind woman has taught me"—

"Halt!" called out a strong voice in front. "Halt!—I command you!"

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"It is too late!—too late!—*too late!*" shrieked Henry.

"No," cried Hugh, "it cannot be too late!" And with all his heart, he prayed,—

"Help of Christians! Help of Christians!"

The cart moved on; both the boys had climbed into it. Henry's arms were about his mother's neck.

"We are Americans!" he called out. "You must not kill us,—we are not aristocrats!"

"They are Americans," repeated Hugh. "They are the father and mother of this boy! See!" he cried, pointing to the rosettes, "we wear the tri-color!"

"Robespierre has fallen!" called out another voice from the crowd. "Let the prisoners go! there has been too much blood!"

Hugh and Henry were thrown to the ground. There were yells and cries, and the stamping of feet; the cart was overturned, Hugh heard nine o'clock strike; he knew no more until he found himself lying in bed in the lodging house, with his hand in that of the Abbé Gaillard. Henry was kneeling beside him; he felt his mother's lips on his brow; he saw Mr. and Mrs. Bache at

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the foot of the bed, and then he fell asleep, hearing the Abbé say:

"At nine o'clock I was on my knees for you; and Faith has won!"

* * * * * *

The worst of the Reign of Terror in France was over. Henry kept his promise and became a devout Catholic, and his father and mother, who had been so near to death, followed his example, in spite of the jeers of Mr. Tom Paine. They saw their beloved Delaware again, and Hugh and his mother and the Abbé Gaillard went with them. The Count Hugh, in time, dropped his sword which he was fond of wearing at all times, and his title, and became a good American and plain Hugh O'Regan.

But there are a few old ladies living still who say that there was no bow so graceful as his in the minuet which was danced in the hall in Chestnut Street when General Washington's great friend, Lafayette, came to visit America.

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CHRISTMAS AT THE HUCKLEBERRIES.

I.

RICHARD SAILS AWAY.

WHEN Richard Mockler's father died, he was left alone in the world. And, although he lived in the County Tipperary, Ireland, he had no relatives. This seems strange,—for everybody in that most clannish of all countries seems to be related to everybody else. He had many friends. The Cantwells, the Prendergasts, and,—I am happy to say,—the Egans gave him helping hands, when the Requiem Mass had been said, and his father's body lowered into earth.

The reason why Richard had no relatives in his own country was this:—his ancestors had fought in the famous Irish Brigade, and his father and mother had gone over to France just after he was born, to live at Arles. They had come back to Ireland to die; and they had died of

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consumption, leaving Richard alone. Nearly all his relatives were in France. His uncle was a priest at Arles,—an old man. Many of his aunts and cousins were in convents; the only relatives to whom he could go were the O'Regans, and they were in America. He was poor, too; when the expenses of his father's funeral were paid,—with the help of those Irish hands, which are ever open,—he had just twenty pounds with which to begin the world. He had written of his father's death to that father's consin,—"Mr. Gerald O'Regan, The Huckleberries, Montgomery County, Pa., United States of America." At once there had come back a loving, cordial answer; and the substance of it was, "Come at once,—and a hundred thousand welcomes." And from the letter fluttered a draft for five pounds. Richard went to the parish priest, and told him that he was about to go to America. The priest sighed;—

"Well, my boy," he said, "God bless you! You'll be welcome there,—for I hear there are more of our blood there than at home."

No news had come from Arles about the great estate Richard Mockler had inherited. The last

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letter received by the priest had been to the effect that the lawsuit about it was to be decided against Richard; and so, poor but hopeful, with all his father's debts paid, he put his foot on a steamer bound for the land of Columbus.

He was sad. He had lived in France a long time, but Ireland was his country. Everybody had been so kind to him, everybody had made him feel at home. As the exquisite green and the gold of the sunlight upon it faded in the distance and the ocean mists gathered about him like the walls of a grey tent, he looked backward, and the words of an old French song came to his mind,—"*Je te laisse mon cœur.*"

> "I leave my heart behind,
> 'Twill never again be well,
> For all the chains that bind
> Are broken,—so farewell!"

He said this over and over again, and he could not get the tune out of his head. And every time, it made him sadder than ever. No,—he could never be glad again. He had lost his parents, he had been separated from his good, kind uncle, the Abbé Esmond, and now he was leaving his kindest friend, Father Prendergast,

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to go among an unknown people. To be sure, these were his cousins. But blood is not always thicker than water, and he might be a burden to them. He was conscious that he could not do much. He had been ill,—in fact everybody said he would die of consumption, like his father and mother. He had been taught many things at Arles, but they were all elegant and useless. He could sing a little, and dance well, he could recite whole pages from Racine's *Athalie;* he had fine manners, it is true, and he had been taught many things, of use in France, but not likely to be at all useful in America. He knew how to raise roses and mushrooms, for the rose gardens of his uncle, Abbé Esmond, had been famous, and his mushroom cellars had helped to build the new church, of which everybody was so proud.

Richard went down into the steerage, when land had disappeared, and tried to forget the unpleasant sights and sounds around him. Father Prendergast had taken a cabin passage for him; but he, to save expense, had exchanged it for one in the steerage. And he did not regret it. Nothing, he said to himself, could make him more unhappy than he was.

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It must be confessed that Richard Mockler had one grave fault. He was proud. And this fault had been made worse by his French and Irish training. At Arles, people spoke of his brave ancestors a great deal, and in Tipperary, the old women had made him believe that he was a very fine boy indeed. And so when Jerry Finnegan, seeing him sitting on the edge of his berth, with his head bowed down, clapped him on the back, he started as if he had been shot.

"Cheer up, young one!" said Jerry, in a rich Connaught brogue. "We're both in the same fix. I notice you're alone,—so am I,—and," Jerry added, with a fall in his voice, as he looked at the family groups around him, "it makes me homesick."

Jerry was ruddy, short, stout, and snub-nosed. He had little blue eyes, a great shock of brown hair, on which a small jockey cap was perched, and hands that looked as if they could strangle a whale. He had a mouth full of good teeth; but Richard observed that his hair needed combing, and that his hands would have been more pleasing for some soap and water. Jerry was an orphan for whom nobody cared now, and, with a

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few shillings in his pocket, he was on his way to the unknown land. Richard stared at him haughtily, and withdrew himself into his rude berth.

Jerry turned away, and the bright look left his face. He tried to hum his favorite tune,—

"The wren within his little nest
Pays no rent,
And is content,
Sure, the wren knows what is best!"

But he could not do it. Somehow, the repulsion of his kindly meant words cut him deep, though he was not used to gentleness. He went into a corner, and wiped his eyes with his threadbare sleeve several times. He called himself a fool, but he was more homesick than ever.

Richard sank sulkily in the berth, not sad now, but dissatisfied. Jerry watched the family groups about him. They were poor, they were about to face terrible hardships,—but they were together; they loved one another. He saw a mother cuff a boy of about his own age, and he wished that his mother's hands were making his ears tingle. She loved the boy,—and he, Jerry, who once had a mother, was alone. He turned

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his face away, and covered it with his hands. Jerry Finnegan,—dashing, careless Jerry Finnegan was crying!

Richard sulked. It is bad to be heavy-hearted, but worse to be dissatisfied with oneself. Richard rolled and tossed and grumbled, but he could not chase away the pained look in Jerry's eyes, —it would rise up before him. At last he took a key from his pocket, and unlocked one of the boxes with which the kind Tipperary people had provided him. He took out a splendid bunch of grapes and a big orange. He stepped down from his berth, and went toward the corner where Jerry crouched.

"Here!" he said, touching Jerry on the shoulder. Jerry turned, saw the fruit, and frowned. He pushed Richard's hand away.

"I don't want your garbage," he said, turning his back to Richard. "You're a stuck-up upstart, —that's what you are. Sure, my people were having all sorts of lashin's and lavin's when yours were eating potato skins,—and glad to get 'em."

Richard clenched his fist; his eyes flashed. His pride was up.

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"If you don't take these," he said, with his queer French accent, "I will give you such a stroke of the fist as will kill you!"

Jerry jumped up. He looked at his own hands, and then at Richard's slender white ones. Then he laughed. That laugh saved Richard.

"I believe you don't mean harm,—and you're a plucky one," he said, casting another look at the fruit. "And, as you are alone, I don't mind if I do make friends with you."

"I thank you," said Richard, humbly. "I hope we shall be friends,—since we have nobody else."

He was heartily glad to see Jerry eat the grapes, and fling the orange to a little three-year-old girl, whose eyes were fixed on it.

The boys forgot their homesickness very soon. Jerry ceased to notice Richard's peculiar accent, and Richard,—though this was harder,—forgot Jerry's unkempt hair and hands. Richard could have forgiven Jerry anything, if he would only look after his finger nails. Richard's politeness was not laughed at in the steerage, for the people were all Irish, and, while an Irishman may laugh at pretension, he is quick to admire what

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is genuine. And he was kind to the children, though his pride nearly got him into trouble when he once or twice resented the horse play and practical jokes of the boys.

Jerry was anxious about him.

"I'll be glad when he's ashore," he said to the woman whose spanking of her son had made him homesick, "he's that proud, that I am afraid he will get into mischief. He's as high-mettled as a race-horse;—he's as stuck-up as a landlord before the Land League came. I've got to watch him like a baby, he is that quick with his fists,—and, faith, there isn't a boy here that couldn't beat him to a jelly, if he wanted to. But he is a good friend of mine,—though he do be as innocent of the way of the world as little John Dillon Maguire there."

And Jerry pointed to a very small boy, who was trying his teeth on a raw turnip.

Richard reached New York in safety, however, for the steerage people seemed to understand him. As the steamer sailed up the bay, past the great statue of Liberty and all the fair views, he sighed again for Ireland. There was no green here; the land was brown and yellow, and he

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sighed again, thinking of the green and gold he had left,—"*Je te laisse mon cœur.*"[1] Jerry looked at the new land with fear. If he could only turn back! Richard's eyes looked straight forward; there was no shrinking in them, but much sadness.

"How do you think you'll like the Americans?" asked Jerry, after a pause.

"Not at all," replied Richard, "they must be a queer people,—if what is said of them be true."

"Ah," said Jerry, with a long sigh, "I hear they live mostly on pork and beans. I suppose a boy couldn't get a dish of buttermilk and potatoes for love or money."

Richard sighed, too, as he looked at the dry, brown banks, and thought of the Irish green and the French rose gardens.

"They've no use for the fine things of life, I hear," he said, "my uncle says that they are hardly Christians, that they wear strange garments, and that they drink iced water with their food. They are savage!"

"But there is plenty of money to be earned,"

[1] I leave thee my heart.

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said Jerry, brightening up. "And then we can go home again."

Richard shook his head sadly.

"That will mean years of work. Money comes not without work. Ah, never without work,—and then everybody will be dead. Home will not be the same."

Jerry, holding his little cap on his head against the stiff breeze, looked at Richard. In the steerage, he knew more; but now Richard seemed to have taken the lead. Fear filled his heart. All so new, so big, so strange!

Once on shore, Jerry was shocked to think that he must leave his companion. Suddenly there seemed to be a difference between them. During the voyage, Richard had worn a flannel shirt and a tight blue cap; but, as they waited at the barge office at Castle Garden, Jerry observed that Richard had dressed himself differently. He wore a white collar, cuffs with sleeve-buttons, a blue sack coat, blue overgaiters, and a blue Derby hat. Jerry had no new clothes, and what he wore had not been improved by his stay in the steerage. He hung his head, and a pang shot through his heart. He had learned to like

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Richard very much; but he felt now that they could be friends no more. There was too much difference between them.

Mrs. Maguire smiled when Richard gave John Dillon one of his shillings, and called out,—

"God bless you, young gentleman!"

And, though Jerry had given that remarkable child a shilling, too, out of his scanty store, she only said,—

"Good luck, Jerry!"

And somehow she did not seem to value his shilling as much as Richard's,—"fine feathers make fine birds," Jerry muttered bitterly.

The good priest, who had come into the steerage and said Mass on the one Sunday they were at sea, shook hands with the boys.

"Good-bye, Richard," he said, "good-bye, Jerry. Remember," he added, with a half smile at Richard's erect bearing, "there's no rank here, and family pride oughtn't to count in America. One man is as good as another,—or one boy either, if he is only decent. Head and heart count, and brains, but not foolish pride."

Richard frowned, and then flushed. He knew what the priest meant; so he meekly carried Mrs.

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Maguire's basket all the way to Fulton Street, while Jerry struggled under the weight of John Dillon. Mrs. Maguire said good-bye again; in Brooklyn she was to stay with friends until she was ready to start for Minnesota.

She had disappeared in the car. Jerry turned to Richard.

"Good-bye," he said, with a tremble in his voice, "Good-bye,—I am glad that I have met you. Some day I may see you again."

The boys were standing on the corner of Broadway and Fulton Streets. Richard had been looking at the crowd which seemed to be hurrying both ways. He started at Jerry's words. He liked Jerry. Jerry's roughness concealed a pious and honest heart, and Richard had learned to know it.

"Good-bye? Good-bye!" he repeated. "What for?"

"Sure, it's time we parted," Jerry said. "It's not for the likes of me to be hanging after the likes of you."

Jerry did not look up at Richard; they were standing near a newspaper stand, and he pretended to be looking at a picture journal.

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"'The likes of me,'" repeated Richard, smiling a little. "Look here, Jerry, when you get a new suit of clothes, you'll not talk that way. And what's more, Jerry, we'll go into the first tailor shop and buy it."

Jerry's eyes flashed.

"Good-bye," he said. "It's not clothes I'd be takin' from anybody. I know I'm not fit to be walking with you, so we'll part. I am no beggar,—not," said Jerry, as a lump came into his throat, "but what I'm sorry,—oh, never mind,—good-bye!"

Richard caught him by the arm. He knew what pride was.

"See here," he said, "what's mine is yours. And you can pay it back when the American gold comes in. Isn't everybody equal in this country, didn't the priest just say so? Come, we shall be brothers, because we are all alone. And we are brothers,—for are we not both Irish?"

Jerry ceased to struggle.

"And isn't blood thicker than water? You'll come with me to my cousins', and then you can work, to pay me back. *Ma foi!*—I am aware

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that there are not many shillings left to you now," he added to himself.

Jerry held out his hand, while he wiped his eyes with his left sleeve. An hour later, the boys, dressed very much alike, had boarded, according to directions, a train on the Pennsylvania Railroad.

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II.

THE HUCKLEBERRIES.

NOVEMBER had passed, December was just in; and every Catholic child was waiting for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception to pass, to feel that Christmas was close at hand.

The Huckleberries,—the girls had begun calling it so in fun,—was a stone house, "pointed" with plaster and built before the Revolution. It was surrounded by fields covering perhaps forty acres. Behind the house were long rows of green-houses, battered and broken. The second Gerald O'Regan had built them, but they had not been used for many years. The third Gerald O'Regan had died in August. It was he who had sent the kind letter to Richard Mockler. The first American O'Regan had been the young Count Hugh, whose story you have read. The young people who now lived at the Huckleberries were his great-grandchildren.

Things had gone wrong with their father. His property in Philadelphia had been sold, and

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even this house and the acres about it were heavily covered with debts. He had been poor when Richard had written to him, but that did not prevent him from offering to share all he had with his cousin's son. But in August he had died suddenly, happy, peaceful, blessing his children, hoping to join their mother, and telling them that God would care for them.

The O'Regans were much alone. There were five of them, the aged grandmother, Geraldine, the eldest, aged fourteen, Bride, a year younger, Alice, ten years old, and little Gerald, who was just seven years old when his father died.

The church was four miles away, but happily there were two horses and a carriage in the barn, and Geraldine had learned to drive and ride as well as any man. Their neighbors were Pennsylvanians who spoke little English, and who had mostly descended from the Hessian soldiers of the Revolution. They were kind when Mr. O'Regan died; after that, they left the children to themselves.

The children did not look forward to Christmas with the usual joy. In truth, after Christmas they would no longer have a home, for on

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the twenty-sixth of December, the mortgage was to be foreclosed, and strangers would take possession of the house.

"It will seem like death coming over again," said Geraldine, as she thought of it. "Oh, how I love these dear rooms, with the books and all the things father and mother lived among. How can we leave them?"

"We shall *not!*" cried Bride. "We *will* not!"

Geraldine sighed. She was tall, slim, and she looked pale in her long black dress. She seemed much older than Bride, whose cheeks were rosy, whose hair was light in color, and who was never still. The girls sat in the little parlor of the house, with shawls wrapped about them, for the wood was hard to chop, but enough was arranged in the grate to welcome with its blaze the arrival of the cousin from Ireland.

"No," said Bride, "I'll not go till they starve me out. There are potatoes and ham and flour in the cellar, and pigs in the sty,—and I'll just bar the door, and keep anybody out,—that's all!"

"But the law!" exclaimed Geraldine, looking

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up from the patch she was sewing on Gerald's jacket, and sighing as she wondered from whence the next one was coming.

"Oh, bother the law!" cried Bride, snapping her thread. "What right has the law to take away our home? Hasn't it been in the family since Mr. Bache gave it to our great-grandfather?"

"But debts must be paid," said Geraldine, her eyes filling with tears. "It wouldn't be honest for us to keep it, if we could."

Bride did not answer. She bent over the little apron she was trying to make for Alice. But Alice herself suddenly crept from behind Geraldine's big chair.

"Papa said God would take care of us," she said, kissing Geraldine. "Don't cry, sister. Papa always told the truth. Oh, dear!—I want papa so badly!"

But Gerald who had been asleep in front of the grate, covered by the rug, awoke, and stretching out his arms, cried,—

"Oh, papa, dear papa!" Then, with a bewildered look in his blue eyes, he said, "I thought papa had come back!"

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The girls dropped their sewing, and clung together sobbing. When she could regain her voice, Bride said,—

"You will see papa again, Gerald. Geraldine," she whispered, "we can hope only from God. On the feast of the Immaculate Mother, let us begin a novena. She will help us!"

Geraldine's heart grew lighter. It is wonderful how womanly Bride had become of late.

"Let us be cheerful, and keep the children bright. Father would want us to be happy. Come, Gerald, and see me make little cakes for the Irish cousin."

Gerald and Alice followed her to the kitchen, and Geraldine, who had a great desire to hide their poverty from the stranger, busied herself in sewing maple leaves on those places in the window curtains which had been darned.

But the stranger knew the worst already. Richard and Jerry had been obliged to stop at the station for an hour before they obtained information as to the road to the Huckleberries. Their guide, a yellow-haired boy, had been only too willing to tell them all about the O'Regans, —how poor they were,—how proud they were,

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and that his uncle would take possession of the Huckleberry Farm on the day after Christmas unless two thousand dollars were paid.

Jerry watched Richard's face eagerly, while this tale was told. He knew why it pained him so much, for he had lost his pocketbook in the train, and he was going to his cousins with only a few dollars.

"Let us turn back," said Richard, "we can't be a burden to them."

Jerry hesitated.

"This boy says they are three little girls and a child"—

"Thank you, Jerry," said Richard, gratefully, "I know what you mean. We can, at least, work for them."

Jerry's face glowed at the thought of pleasing his friend. The two boys trudged through the dry leaves and heavy soil, taking a short cut. It was twilight, when they saw the lamp of the Huckleberries through the trees.

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III.

WHAT WILL THE DAY BRING FORTH?

THE boys carefully scraped the soles of their shoes on the stone at the gate.

"I wish we had not come," said Richard, with a sigh. "We are empty-handed; we shall be a burden on them. Oh, if I had not been so foolish as to leave my pocketbook under the pillow in that sleeping-car,—and then to think of letting the train move off with it. I am a fool."

"There's no use in crying over spilt milk," said Jerry.

"Oh, I am of a stupidity most horrible!" cried Richard, dropping into his French manner of speech again. "I *hate* to go in; we are beggars."

"Not while we have our health," said Jerry. The boys were whispering under the oaks in front of the house. The door opened suddenly, and Geraldine's face appeared, with Bride's just behind.

"There are two of them!" cried little Gerald,

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edging between his sisters. Richard stepped forward, and made his most graceful bow. Jerry hung back. Geraldine made way, and the boys entered the room.

A glowing wood fire burned in the grate, throwing ruddy gleams on the red curtains of the windows and on the *portiere* that divided the parlor from the drawing-room. A lamp was set near the window, shaded by a crimson paper shade. Near the fire in a Shaker rocking-chair sat the grandmother, white-haired, feeble, thinking of little, not able to speak much, but with a kindly smile. Richard bowed very low to her, and Jerry stiffly nodded his head. She smiled and waved her hand as if blessing them.

Geraldine put another log on the fire; Bride knew that she grudged every stick, for they had to take turns in chopping it. Geraldine wore a pair of old black gloves; she was ashamed of her red hands, while Bride openly displayed hers. It had not been easy for these girls, taken from their convent school, to do all the rough work when their servant left them,—and yet they would have been glad to go on doing it, if they could keep their home.

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"The boy will bring up our trunks in the morning," Richard said.

"But which is our cousin?" asked Geraldine.

"I am Richard,—that is, Dick Mockler, if you like," answered Richard, smiling.

"What a funny way of speaking! You must be Dutch!" said the frank and artless Gerald.

This broke the ice. They all laughed: Grandmother was led in to the table by Richard, who thought that he had never been in so cheerful a place. The table was lit by two candles with red shades, and ornamented with a great bunch of the red-berried asparagus bush, while a yellow chrysanthemum was laid at each plate.

"Oh, my!" cried Gerald. "We are going to have a real supper,—not oatmeal. It seems as if papa were back again. We haven't had"—

Bride whispered "Hush!" And Geraldine caught a look in Richard's eyes which made her straighten herself up; she was proud, too; she did not want sympathy.

Bride and Alice enjoyed themselves. It was a new thing to have companions. Geraldine did not speak. After tea was over, the boys were left with the grandmother in the parlor. They

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were tired. Grandmother dozed, so they did not talk much. There was a clattering of dishes in the next room; but Richard's quick ears heard Geraldine say,—

"I wish he hadn't come! How shall we ever tell him that, after Christmas, we shall be beggars. He must have heard something; he pities us. And how shall we ever split wood, and wash for these two. It's hard enough now. I wish they'd go!"

"Don't say that, Geraldine," spoke Bride. "He's our cousin, and the other one is so amusing. *I* intend to tell them *all*. I hate pride. I never had any. I hope he's rich, and can help us,—but I remember now papa said he was poor."

"If you tell, I'll never speak to you!"

Richard parted the curtain and put his head into the dining-room. The girls turned amazed faces toward him.

"My cousins," he said, his voice trembling a little, "we are all poor together. I assure you that if my companion and I had enough money to pay our way back, we should not stay. As it is, we must."

Geraldine's pride was appeased; she turned

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away, with a cup and saucer in her hand. Bride burst out laughing, and dropped a plate.

After this, they all became friends. Richard and Jerry chopped and sawed big piles of wood; they shot rabbits and ducks, and even helped with the washing. But nobody needed them for work. The farmers, all of them well-off and thrifty, were kind to the boys; but they needed no "hands" in the winter.

Christmas approached. On the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, all, even grandmother, received the Holy Eucharist, that the dear home might be spared.

On Christmas eve, the group about the blazing fire was downhearted. The boys had brought in loads of green, and the little room was a bower. There was a huge turkey in the pantry, sent by a neighbor, mince pies, cranberries for sauce, and even candy and nuts and a toy or two for Gerald, bought by Jerry with the very last of his money. Richard had some bog oak ornaments for the girls, which had been his mother's. Everybody had prepared a little gift for the morrow. But their hearts were sore. The boys had not been able to get work, and there was not five

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dollars in the house; and in another day, the home would pass into the hands of strangers. The girls had grown more and more silent, as the day passed. They all tried to be gay,—why not? —it was Christmas eve, but the smiles died on their lips. Jerry and Gerald were bright and cheery. Jerry had been very happy at the Huckleberries,—and, after all, what might not happen in a whole day, and that day Christmas?

The girls went to bed early, with grandmother. They must be up in time for the earliest Mass. They could scarcely speak; there were tears in Bride's eyes. Last Christmas had been so different!

After they were gone, Richard threw himself at full length on the floor in front of the fire. He groaned as he did so, for he had sprained his ankle badly in the tangled huckleberry bushes looking for a rabbit.

"I have prayed and prayed," he said. "It's no use, Jerry. I may as well give up. And, if we could only keep this place, I could make 'lots of money,' as the Americans say. I'd fix the green-houses, grow roses, and send them every day to Philadelphia; and think of the mushrooms

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we could raise in the cellars under them! It's no use. Oh, the sadness of it! One more day, and the old grandmother and my cousins will have no home!"

"I shall never give up praying," said Jerry, gravely. "And God and the Blessed Virgin can do more in a day than we can in a hundred years. Poor little Gerald is praying, too. And I'm sure,—faith, I'm sure,—that the Holy Child is not going to refuse a little boy's prayer on Christmas. It's good for you here," Jerry added, "you've lost your paleness;—you're getting color in your cheeks."

"If I can only get strong," Richard said, "I'll work for them till I die!"

Richard's heart lightened; he could not tell why,—but he said the rosary with all his might before he went to bed. He could not go to Mass the next morning; his ankle was very much swollen. Early in the morning,—Gerald had been up since dawn, rejoicing over the contents of his stocking,—the sound of a tin horn caused Jerry and Bride to run to the door. It was in the hands of the white-headed boy. He grinned maliciously.

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"I came to look at *our* house," he said, maliciously. "My uncle will take it to-morrow."

Jerry made a rush at him, but he disappeared, dropping the tin horn, which Jerry battered to pieces. The girls were very quiet during the drive to early Mass, and grandmother was occupied with her beads.

* * * * * *

The Mass was over. Jerry had come out of the church a little before the girls, in order to untie the horse, and arrange the blankets. As he stood by the side of the road, a man spoke to the sexton who was passing with the collection plates from the priest's house.

"Well, I'd better go back," the man said, "I've done all I could. So there's nobody of that name in the parish."

"Never heard of any Mockler here,—it's not an Irish name," said the sexton, "and all our people have Irish names."

"Yes, it is!" spoke up Jerry. "It's as Irish as Finnegan;—and, if it's Richard Mockler you're after wanting, I can take you right to him."

"It is," said the man, turning his keen black eyes, which were buried in the high collar of his

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ulster, toward the boy. "And I've got some good news for him."

"Thank God!" cried Jerry. "He needs it."

"I'll get into my buggy," said the lawyer, for he was Mr. Jasper Busket, "and you can lead the way."

Grandmother and the girls got into the wagon, and off they went, all glad of good news for Richard, but not daring to hope themselves.

Jerry made quick time,—how the old wagon creaked, and how the lawyer's ancient horse stretched his sinews! They reached home at nine o'clock. Jerry went at once to the stable; grandmother was led to her room by Alice, the girls and Gerald went to the kitchen,—the stuffing of the turkey being a matter of intense interest to the little fellow,—and Richard was left with Mr. Jasper Busket.

In half an hour, the lawyer was on his way to Philadelphia with a receipt from Richard in his pocket. Richard gave a howl, and the family rushed into the parlor, where he sat with a bandaged foot, but a jolly face.

"There!" he cried, with laughing lips, but moist eyes. "There! I never prayed so hard in

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my life as I did this morning! There!" He held out a thin piece of paper.

"The Child Jesus has sent us our house back. I know it!" Gerald said. Richard caught him up and kissed him.

"It's half the money for the Arles houses and lots—four thousand dollars. It came to Father Prendergast just after I left Ireland, and he made it follow me from Castle Garden here. And it's nearly one thousand pounds.

"Four thousand dollars!" cried Bride.

"And the white-headed boy won't live in this house, will he?" asked Gerald.

"No!" said Richard. "And now for a jolly Christmas at the Huckleberries."

At this moment, the white-headed boy passed through the garden, and looked in at the window.

"May I?" asked Jerry, with a motion of his foot. "May I?"

"No," said Richard, laughing. "Let there be peace to-day."

Did they have a merry Christmas or not? "I should say YES!" as Gerald would remark.

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Richard,—this is in November, 1898,—has turned the green-houses into great beds of roses, and in the cellars, masses of mushrooms come up every night. He is working hard, and so is Jerry. Bride and Alice are back at school. Next year he will go, to study for the priesthood, and Jerry will look after the business. Geraldine is happy in the old house, caring for grandmother.

"My boy," Richard often says to Jerry, "if I hadn't overcome my pride in the steerage, we shouldn't have had that jolly Christmas at the Huckleberries. And I shouldn't have as strong a pair of lungs and the health that hard work gives. God grant that next Christmas may make all in sorrow as happy as that Christmas made me!"

And Jerry, light-hearted as usual hums,—

"The wren within his little nest
Pays no rent
And is content,—
Sure, the wren knows what is best!"

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PAUL, THE HERO.

I.

BY THE FIRESIDE.

In his heart, Paul Redfern wanted to be a hero. His favorite personages in history were Sir Thomas More and George Washington and Admiral Dewey. His teacher had recommended all the boys of his class to choose a character in history, and to read all they could find to read about them,—to make them their own. Paul particularly admired More for his constant cheerfulness in the face of danger.

"Oh, dear!" he said to his mother one day, "how I would like to have a chance to do something grand. It makes me feel as if I could move mountains when I read about Washington's refusing to give way to the people when they were all going mad about the French Revolution. It's a fine thing to be unpopular, if one is right!"

It was on a Saturday afternoon that Paul

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spoke. He had been out nutting all the morning, and he had curled himself in the goatskin rug at his mother's feet before the grate. He had Father Bridgett's "Life of Sir Thomas More" open before him, and he was comfortably settled for the afternoon.

A slow rain had begun to fall. Mrs. Redfern was sewing in her big armchair, the old cat was purring away, and Emily Redfern sat at the table, propped up on a dictionary, drawing a hazel branch she had brought home.

"I should think you would get tired of your tiresome 'Lives,'—I should like a story book now and then," said Emily. "And this is just the day for a story book. If I were rich, I should do nothing but lie on a sofa, drink lemonade, and read story books. As it is, I have to draw this horrid hazel leaf to paint on a plate for Grandma's Christmas gift!"

Paul looked at his mother. Emily was only thirteen years of age; he was a year older.

"I never read story books," he said. "I read and read about Washington and More over and over again. I shall write an essay when I get into a higher class on the lives of these great men."

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Paul said this with a very superior air which his mother noticed.

"The worst of it is," he went on, "that there are no chances for heroism in everyday life."

"My dear," his mother said, "you must live each hour so that it may be a preparation for any act of heroism that you may be put in the way of performing. A man does not become a hero all at once. If he be mean and cowardly in little things, he will fail when a great one faces him."

"I am sure *I* would not," cried Paul, his eyes flashing, "I wish I had a chance. Now, if the house would catch fire, or if a Roman Pagan should ask me to burn incense to false gods,—you'd see, mother, how I would act."

"A Pagan Roman!" said Emily, "you know the Pagans are all dead. Pancratius, in Fabiola, was lovely,—I don't believe you could be as brave as he was!"

"You don't!" said Paul. "You are just like all girls,—you think because a boy is your brother, he is no good."

"Not at all," said Emily, "but I am glad I don't live in the times of the martyrs. It makes me shudder to think of that poor little boy who

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tried to take the Blessed Sacrament, hid over his heart, through the streets. And the Pagans tore him to pieces, but the Blessed Sacrament had gone to Heaven with his soul."

"I wish I lived in those days!" persisted Paul. "How comfortable it is here,—I wish we could always be with you, mamma, with a warm fire like this and our books. A boy feels so good."

"And the rain outside which keeps you from continuing the nutting expedition," said his mother, smiling. "I am afraid you would not think so much of the inside if the sun were shining and McGargan's dray were waiting to take you and your friends into the woods after hazel nuts. My dear Paul, it is very easy to be good when one has no temptations."

"You don't know me," said Paul, "I shall be a hero some day!"

"Paul! Paul!" said Emily, who prided herself on her grammar. "'Shall' in the first person implies only future action! You should say 'will'!"

Paul lost his temper.

"I don't see why you are always correcting me," he said, "and making me seem like a fool!"

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His mother looked at him.

"I expect more self-control from a hero," she said.

"Emily provokes me!"

"A hero should bear provocation. Don't you think Columbus and George Washington had much to bear? Fancy how rude and insolent Columbus' crew must have been at times, and how many of Washington's men deserted. A hero must bear and forbear, as well as fight."

"I don't care," said Paul. "Emily's ways would try a saint. I am sure that I could stand being cut to pieces with a sword, but I can't stand fly-bites. I don't believe Dewey could!"

"You will never be a hero then,—never!"

"You shall see,—if I only have a chance."

"You are not likely to have the kind of chance that Sir Thomas More, or Columbus, or Washington had,—but you can be heroic in overcoming yourself. And, by the way, this is the first Saturday of the month."

"Oh, dear!" said Paul, "it's just my luck. I suppose you mean that it is the day for going to confession."

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"Yes,—Emily went this morning. And the heat of the fire has made me so sleepy!"

"Oh, I *hate* to go to confession. It's raining," said Paul, coughing with an effort. "I shall,—no will,—no shall,—catch cold. Can't I wait till next Saturday!"

"Confession should never be put off," said his mother, gently.

"If I must, I must," said Paul, disentangling himself from the warm rug. "Oh, dear, it spoils everything! How I dislike it!"

"It is a duty," said his mother, "to be done for the glory of God."

With the pace of a snail, Paul went to the hall for his top coat. His mother called him back, and asked him to put his book in its place on the shelf. He obeyed her rather sulkily.

"Child," she said, kissing him, "if we fail in the little duties, we shall never do the great ones herocially."

Paul said nothing. The rain began to come down heavily, as he reached the corner. He raised his umbrella, and thinking of his wrongs, ran into a person who came around the corner like a whirlwind.

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II.

THE TEMPTATIONS.

"HELLO, Paul!"

"Hello, Reddy!"

Redmond Boyle happened to have red hair, and he answered to this abbreviation without feeling it as an insult. He wore a thick jacket, and, although he was a big boy, his legs were encased in knickerbockers. He lived in the block next to that in which Paul lived. Paul never asked Redmond to his house, because his mother had found a quid of tobacco under a chair a short time after Redmond had visited them.

Mrs. Redfern had a special objection to tobacco chewing. And Paul had promised her that he would neither chew nor smoke. So far Paul had kept his promise, and had never smoked a cigarette. His face was not rosy, but it was clear and healthy, while Redmond's was yellow in color and his eyes looked heavy.

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"Haven't seen you for a cat's lives, Paul."

"No,—I stay at home a great deal when I am not in the woods."

"Thought so. Have you got a cigarette about you."

"Don't smoke."

"O-o-o-h?" said Redmond, grinning. "Mammy's boy!"

Paul flushed.

"Where are you going now?"

"To church."

"Confession? Oh, I've cut all that of late. That's the best of going to a public school. Nobody nags you about religion. At the Brothers', it was awful. Confession every month. Oh, I say,—we're rigging up a telephone from our garret to Ben Faune's. We're going to have a high old time. I am going to buy the nuts and raisins and cakes and a bottle of ginger ale. Every fellow chips in a quarter. Of course you haven't got a quarter. Clarence Jones says your mammy won't let her boy have any money."

"It is not true," said Paul, "my mother gives me all I need, and she is a widow, too, and

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hasn't much to spare. *I* don't try to pass plug-ten-cent pieces like Puggy Jones."

"I'll bet you haven't got any money about you," said Redmond, winking to himself. "Why, there's Puggy Jones,"—he put two of his fingers into his mouth, and blew a shrill whistle. "Puggy's on his way to our house."

Clarence answered from the opposite corner with a shrill whistle. He was a short, stout boy, with an upturned nose; he wore a snuff-colored suit and a brilliant red necktie.

"I'm here," he said, having crossed the street.

"Hello, Reddy!—hello, Redfern!"

"Paul pretends that his mammy lets him have more than a cent at a time," said Redmond, "but we don't believe it, do we Pug?"

"Seeing's believing," said Clarence.

Paul's impulse was to go on, without further speech. But his pride arose. He thrust his hand into his trouser's pocket, and pulled out two quarters and a ten-cent piece. Redmond and Clarence took him, each by an arm.

"I'll tell any boy that says that you are tied to your mother's apron string that he is a liar," said Redmond.

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"I always stood up for you, Paul, when the other fellows said you had no sand," spoke up Clarence, grinning at Redmond.

"We'll have two more bottles of ale, if you'll chip in," said Redmond. "Come on!"

"I can't," said Paul. "I must go to church."

"Oh, cut church for one day," said Redmond. "There's no use praying in the daytime. A fellow can take care of himself then,—a prayer or two at night is all right, though I forget it pretty often."

"He doesn't want to spend his money," said Clarence, jeeringly. "Oh, let him go; he wants to give his money to his mammy and be patted on the head like a nice boy!"

"You can keep the money," said Paul, indignantly, "and drink your ginger ale. I don't want any."

He thrust the money into Clarence's hand.

"That won't do," said Redfern, holding him by the sleeve. "You've got to be one of us. Come,—and join the fun. Skinny Givins is going to tell a story, and do a clog dance, and the telephone is GREAT!"

The boys held him tight. Before him was the

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prospect of going to confession. He knew that after it was over, he should feel as clean as a whistle; he always did. But he compared the ordeal with a prospect of the free afternoon in the garret,—the telephone, the clog dance, nuts, raisins and cakes, and all sorts of fun. The boys pulled hard at his arms.

He knew well what Sir Thomas More would have done;—he would have gone onward to his duty. Paul struggled; the boys held on to him. Suppose he did not go to confession at once; suppose he amused himself a little while, —what difference could it make.

"Go then, mammy's pet!" called Clarence, releasing him. "You may be pious, but you'll not have any fun!"

Paul stood still for an instant. "All right," he said, "let us go for the ginger ale."

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III.

IN THE GARRET.

THE boys linked arms, and kept step. Paul tried to feel jolly. Wasn't he having fun, and, when a boy is having fun, ought not he to feel jolly? Somehow or other, he could not feel as if he were having a good time.

For an instant after he had made up his mind not to go to confession, a weight seemed lifted from his mind. But then the question presented itself: What would he tell his mother? After he had gone a certain distance with his acquaintances, it became as clear as day to him that he would not go near the church at all. No; would spend the afternoon with these jolly companions, now that he was in for it.

As he went along in the pouring rain, he thought of his mother's talk. It seemed as if Emily was laughingly pointing at him, and saying sarcastically, "Paul, the hero! Paul, the hero!" He was not happy; he was very uncomfortable, for the rain dripped inside his col-

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lar, and the other boys had a playful way of stamping in the gutters, as they passed, and splashing the mud over him.

Paul longed to stand still, and to refuse to go farther. It would all have been over in a minute; and he suspected that the boys cared more for his contribution to the feast than his society. But, knowing this, he dared not defy their sneers. What would Emily and his mother say, if they saw him now, so soon after his noble words of the morning? Where was the bravery, the fortitude, the piety of the imitator of Sir Thomas More now?

Keeping step and with linked arms, the boys went along the street, occasionally lurching from side to side. They kicked over an ash-barrel that stood on the curbstone in front of poor Mrs. Mason's door. The ashes, which the scavenger had forgotten in the morning, covered her clean sidewalk, in which she took so much pride. She ran out to see what thoughtless creature had done this, and fancied that one of the boys looked like Paul Redfern.

"No," she said, "it can't be Paul, for he is a Catholic, and I know from Emily, who brought

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me my soup to-day, that he is going to confession to-day, and so can't be up to any such tricks."

Paul's conscience smote him, as he saw his companions knock over the old widow's ash-barrel without a protest. He knew that the cleaning of that side walk so that it would have an air of Sunday neatness was a matter of duty with her. He knew that she was aged and weary, and needed rest, and that this bit of "jollity" on the part of his associates would cause her several hours of painful labor in the rain, and perhaps help to bring her rheumatism back; for this aged body could never permit the folk passing to church to see her premises covered with ashes. He could have saved her this useless work; and he had been afraid. An hour ago, he would not have believed it possible that he could be such a coward. How Emily would despise him, if she knew! After all, *she* didn't amount to much, he said to himself, girls were only girls,—but, all the same, he was glad she did not know!

It turned out that the man at the corner had only one bottle of ginger ale. They bought raisins and nuts and apples and cakes and a yard

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of Bologna sausage. Paul's money was still left.

Clarence winked at Redmond.

"Let's buy beer and cigarettes," he whispered.

"Milk-and-water will fuss about it," whispered Redmond in return.

"No, he will not," sneered Clarence, "he has no backbone."

"All right, Puggy!"

The boys linked arms with Paul, and before he was aware of what they intended to do, they had wheeled him into a very queer-looking liquor saloon on the other corner. Even then he did protest. He was silent until Redmond offered him a tin can to carry.

"This will not do," he said, making a motion to reject it.

"Keep quiet," Redmond fiercely answered, "what will the barkeeper think of you?"

Paul was silent. He had come to that pass where the approval of an unknown person was more to him than his own self-respect. He was ashamed and afraid. He carried the can of beer into the street, devoutly hoping that nobody would see him.

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It happened that as they passed Mrs. Mason's she stood on the sidewalk in the rain working away with her worn-out old broom at the sodden mass of ashes on the pavement. Her eyes bulged out, as she saw Paul carrying the beer. He averted his eyes.

"Good gracious!" she exclaimed. "It can't be you, Paul Redfern. Where are you going with *that?*"

"We are taking it to Mrs. Redfern's," Clarence spoke up, "she is not well, and she thought she'd like something strengthening."

Redmond almost choked at this pleasant speech of his witty friend; Paul reddened to the eyes, but said nothing. It seemed disrespectful, but, after all, it was in fun, he said to himself.

"I didn't mean to take your mother's name in vain, old boy," said Clarence, when they had passed Mrs. Mason, leaving her fixed in astonishment, "but if the old woman had not been answered some way, she'd have stopped us, and maybe told."

After this, they went through back streets and alleys, where the sight of their cans and packages was not likely to astonish people. Paul

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knew he was a sneak. He had always been frank and honest until now, and he hung his head to think that he was really a coward. He cheered himself up with the thought that he was going to have lots of fun. He could not help feeling that if this were fun, it was rather dismal.

Redmond and Clarence danced and shouted, to show how jolly they were, and took a sip or two out of the cans, to make themselves feel very "tough" and "manly."

At last, after a period of agony for Paul,—at every turn he expected to see Mrs. Mason again or somebody that knew his mother,—they reached the back of the large brick house in which Redmond Boyle lived. Redmond put his finger to his lips, gave his can to Paul for safe-keeping, and pushed open the gate that led into the yard.

The boy stole on tiptoe through a passage which led past the kitchen, and up the back stairs. Paul would have said his prayers, if he dared. It seemed to him that God would not listen to him unless he turned back, and he was afraid to turn back. At the same time he was afraid to go forward.

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"If my old man were to find us out," whispered Redmond, "he'd skin us alive."

Paul started. Surely somebody was coming! He pushed against Clarence. Clarence fell against Redmond, who was above him on the stairs, and the cans clattered together and rolled downstairs. Their clatter seemed to the boys as the crack of doom.

The boys forgot caution, and rushed upstairs. They threw themselves against the door of the attic, which opened inward with a crash.

"Bar the door!" said Clarence. "We're safe here until somebody finds out that beer is dropping down the stairs."

"My father will kill me," said Redmond, bitterly. "It's your fault, Paul. I wish you hadn't come!"

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IV.

PAUL'S AGONY.

"I WISH I hadn't come," Paul said, "just give me back my money, and I will go. I may as well go away from home forever now. I am disgraced. Nobody will ever speak to me again!"

Paul did not want his money, but he was angry with them and himself, and he wanted to show it. The prospect of being obliged to give the money back, brought to Redmond a sense of what was due to a guest who might make a noise and tell his father. A tall, raw-boned youth, with a hard face, who rejoiced in the name of Skinny Givins was standing with a group of others near the window. He came forward and thrust a cigarette into Paul's lips.

"Come, Paul," he said, "be a man,—take a puff of that, like all of us."

"Not at all," called out Clarence Jones, with a wink at Givins, "he is too much of a man to smoke cigarettes,—give him a cigar."

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A light-colored and dropsical-looking cigar was put into Paul's lips, in place of the cigarette, which was snatched away. And Paul, flattered at being held to be so manly, lighted it and tried to pull at it with all his might. The smell of the rank thing made him sick, but he soon found that no amount of drawing at it would keep it alight, and he was glad to throw it away.

"Paul is not used to 'two for fives,'" said Clarence, with another wink. "Sorry we haven't something better. Come,—let us rig up the telephone, and then have our feed."

The various packages were put on the head of a barrel which stood in the middle of the floor. The room contained all sorts of odds and ends,—hats, coats, cast-off garments of all kinds, and the boys proposed to have a masquerade, after the feast was over.

Paul's physical illness passed off; but he was heartsick. He had broken his promise to his mother; he was degraded; he could never hold up his head again; and what was worse, he had made up his mind to be a liar.

Skinny Givins jumped on the floor, having removed his shoes, and began a noiseless and

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monkey-like dance, while Jones whistled. The boys laughed, with their hands over their mouths, at Skinny's steps and grimaces. But Paul could not laugh. And this was "fun!"

The telephone was, in the meantime, rigged up. It was to consist of an empty tomato can at this end connected by a wire with a tomato can in the window of Ben Faunce's house a short distance away. After some conversation over the wire, the boys at Redmond Boyle's were to invite Ben Faunce to come to the feast.

But there was a delay. Ben Faunce was seen waving a pillow case from his window, which meant a suspicion on his part that the feast had begun without him. Jones waved his red necktie, in return, in order to inspire confidence.

The delay was caused by the discovery that there was not sufficient wire. Doubt reigned. Redmond suddenly remembered that there was a coil of wire around the flag-staff on the roof. It had been twined around the pole, in order to strengthen it. He volunteered to climb to the top. Paul said that it was slippery; but Redmond said he could climb like a cat even in wet weather.

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It was agreed that, as Paul had strong muscles, he should place himself at the mansard window, which projected above the roof, and be ready to grasp Redmond, if he should fall,—but everybody laughed at the idea of his falling.

Redmond went out on the wet shingles. The flag pole was damp, and hard to climb; but helped by the wire, he reached the top, and began to unwind it.

Paul kept his head out of the window,—his eyes gloomily fixed on the tin spout whose battered and broken and rusty surface went well with his dark thoughts. He was not thinking of Redmond, but of himself.

Suddenly there was a shrill cry, and Redmond shot in front of him. Paul's blood seemed to freeze. Redmond had fallen from the flag-staff, —but his jacket caught on the tin spout; he fell below the roof, and it was plain that the jacket held him from going farther, though he could not be seen from the window. Paul heard the boys' laughter inside; they did not know what had happened. He could see that the sharp tin was cutting through the pocket of the jacket. Unless he ventured out on the steep and slippery

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roof to save his friend, Redmond must go down. There was not an instant to be lost. Paul was usually a brave boy. He could swim long, row long, and dare almost anything. But now he was frozen by fear. He dared not risk his life. He had not been to confession; there was sin on his soul. At ordinary times, he would not have paused. Now he hesitated for a moment; and the tin cut through the cloth. There was an appalling cry, a crash of glass. Paul turned to the boys in the room. His face was white.

"I have killed Redmond Boyle," he said, "yes, I have killed him!" he repeated.

* * * * * *

"Paul," said his mother's voice, "wake up; you are a dreadfully sleepy boy. You have lain with you head on the 'Life of Sir Thomas More' for half an hour. The fire is almost out,—it's confession day, you know."

"I have killed Redmond Boyle," he said, looking up, dazed.

"Nonsense," said his mother, "I just saw Redmond and Clarence Jones passing in the street, with a great coil of wire. You have been dreaming."

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"Thank God, mother!—thank God!" he said, putting his face on her shoulder, with a tear or two in his eyes. "Thank God!"

After he came from confession he told his dream,—only he was never quite sure that it was all a dream—and Emily sometimes calls him "Paul, the Hero."

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A VALENTINE OF VALENTINES.

I.

THE TUNNEL.

NED was very tired of the long winter. It had been colder than any winter he had known in the ten years of his life. His mother's house stood on a hill; it was surrounded by cedar trees which broke the force of the wind from the great lake, but the sound of that wind seemed always in his ears. Moaning, groaning, it rose high and low in daytime and at night. It seemed to Ned as if it would never stop. If he could have gone to school, it would not have been so bad. But the schoolhouse was far off, and Ned had been sick. Beside, he knew nobody. If he had, he might have gone across the lake on one of the ice-boats, which are so much better than sleds and which skim over the ice with the grace of swans and the swiftness of eagles. Ned could see them from the window

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of the attic. He watched their swelling sails and he wished with all his heart that he could ride in one. He had not even a pair of skates, though the ice was thick and smooth at the foot of the hill.

His father had been appointed as an agent to arrange some difficulties among the lumbermen in the great pine woods of Lake Michigan; he had settled with his wife and little son in this house on the hill toward the end of July, when there was no sign of winter and the fringed gentian bloomed about the ponds and the buttercups were everywhere. At the end of August, his father had died suddenly, and he and his mother had been left. His mother bore her grief bravely; she spent many hours in the little church at St. Ignace, but when Ned fell ill of fever, she had to devote all her time to him. She could not leave him even to go to church.

Before Christmas the snow had piled itself so high around the little house, that Mrs. Martin and Ned would certainly have perished of starvation, had not the pantry been well stocked with salt meats, flour, canned vegetables, and all the

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necessaries which Mr. Martin, in his forethought, had provided when he ordered the stores for the lumbermen's camp.

Mrs. Martin would not have felt the loneliness so much, if she could have gone to church. She would not have missed people,—for she wanted to be alone with her sorrow,—and she had her own little boy, and no mother can ever really be lonely while her boy is with her. It is only when he is gone, that she is lonely.

However, she and Ned said the rosary every night, and on Sundays, when the snow kept the light out of the downstairs windows, they went into the bright sunshiny attic and read the prayers of the Mass, going in spirit across the lake to the little church.

But how long the winter was! Ned read and reread all the books in the house. He read "Robinson Crusoe" and "The Catholic Crusoe" over and over again and volumes of the *Ave Maria* and "The Catholic World" and his United States history. No mail came, for here there was no carrier, and his mother could not get across to the post office, nor could he.

"It is a good place to wear out old clothes,"

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he said, "I'll never have a chance of wearing my Sunday clothes here, mother," he said.

Mrs. Martin smiled. She looked pale and careworn, and she was beginning to grow a little anxious. What if the snow blockade continued another month? The ham was almost gone, the stock of canned beans and tomatoes was very low,—for February had come in,—and the flour would not last much longer. Fortunately, there was a great deal of cut wood and the pump in the kitchen gave plenty of good water. The sky was still grey and the snow still fell; there was no sign of a thaw. Mrs. Martin, sewing at the black bonnet which it seemed as if she was never to wear again, sighed, and put another log into the big stove in the attic. The snow had darkened the lower part of the house, so they made themselves as comfortable as they could in the long room which took up the whole length and breadth of the house immediately under the roof.

Ned had found one amusement. His mother had made him a bow and arrows, and he practiced continually at a curious target made from a picture taken from one of last year's calendars. His delight when he hit Bismarck,—this

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was the picture he used,—straight in the eye made his mother forget all her troubles.

She did not tell him that the provisions were getting low. Toward the middle of February, there was still no sign of a thaw, and the snow came down every second day. How many times during those weary and anxious days did Ned's mother wish that she had gone to Mackinac Island or St. Ignace for the winter. But the house had been rented for a year and paid in advance to the owner who lived in Florida, and she did not wish to pay double rent. She began to be alarmed. Anxiously she watched the leaden sky and anxiously she prayed. The snow was now so high that the house, which stood on the side of the hill, seemed wedged in between two white drifted mountains. It was now dark even in the attic at noontime.

"Oh, dear," said Ned, "I wish I could get out,—those bird traps I set the last time we were out must be just full of birds. If we only had one or two for soup, mother, or a stew."

"Yes," said his mother, thinking of him, not of herself. "I wish we had."

Ned looked into her face; she was sewing by

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candle-light, although it was early in the afternoon. It was the first time he had ever heard her wish for anything, and a great desire filled him to gratify this wish; he looked at her again.

"Little mother is growing thinner;—if I could only shoot a rabbit for her, wouldn't it be lovely? It would be immense!"

He did not know that the last slice of ham had been used, and that a great fear oppressed his mother's heart.

Ned searched through the few books in the house, to find an account of a boy that had been "snowed up." He could find none. Then he remembered that to-morrow would be St. Valentine's Day; he had always sent his mother a valentine. But he had lived in Grand Rapids then, where it was easy to buy things. If he wanted a valentine now, he would have to make it himself. He found a sheet of white paper and took out his box of paints. But he wanted it to be a surprise; it would not do for his mother to see him. He would wait until she had gone to bed, and so he went into the corner, threw himself down on the buffalo robes there, and drifted into dreamland. He had just killed six rabbits

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and a squirrel with his arrows when his mother roused him. Tea was ready. There were muffins and stewed potatoes.

"I shall have to tell him to-morrow, that we have almost nothing left."

Ned was in good spirits.

"'Who killed cock robin,'
'I,' said the sparrow,
'With my little arrow,
I killed cock robin.'"

When they had said the rosary, Mrs. Martin went down to her room for quiet prayer and meditation before she went to bed. She kissed Ned good-night, and he, chuckling to himself, went to the table and spread the sheet of paper before him.

"What queer things happen!" he said to himself. "Just think of my being a poet and never knowing it!" He chuckled again; there seemed to be poetry in what he had just said; he tried to find out just where it was, but somehow he could not. He drew the outline of a large heart in red paint, and wrote with ink in the blank space in the centre,—

"I love the roses on the stem,
But I love you much better than them."

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But this did not satisfy him. There was still a vacant place to be filled; so he printed,—after much thought,—

"You are so sweet, you are so fine.
You are my loving Valentine,
More true than time my love shall run,
I hope this finds you well,—
"Your son,—
"NED."

This pleased him. He had no envelope, so he folded his paper as neatly as he could, wrote upon it,—"Mrs. Nora Martin," and pushed it under her bedroom door.

He was not sleepy; he had a long nap, and the thought of the birds in their trap and the rabbits he might kill kept his imagination busy.

"If I could only get out," he said, "if I could only get out! What a valentine it would be, to bring mother a partridge or two, such as they caught in the fall, or even some fat robins. Oh, I wish I could!"

He lit a new candle, and went down to the kitchen. He raised the kitchen window, which was protected by a shed, and looked at the white wall before him, which showed a thousand glistening points under the candle's ray.

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"If Robinson Crusoe were here, I wonder what he would do," he thought, helplessly looking at this thick barrier which cut him off from the outer world. "I know! I know!" he said, after a pause, "he would make a tunnel."

He took the little snow shovel, and began the work. It seemed to him as if it could be done. The snow was compact, but not hard to work, even for him.

"A tunnel," he said, "a tunnel! I'll begin to-morrow before mother is up, and get her the birds and rabbits for breakfast!"

He pulled down the kitchen window and went to bed, first closely fixing his mind on four o'clock, for he had resolved to awake at that hour.

He did not awaken until five o'clock. He listened. The wind was moaning; but his mother had not risen yet. He smiled as he looked at the little clock on the bureau. Five o'clock!—in two hours his mother would be making a delicious stew from the birds and rabbits he would bring from the outer world. He said his prayers, and then went down to the kitchen, chuckling softly to himself. How surprised his mother would be

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when she should see the spoil he would bring home.

As Ned put his candle on the window sill, through which no wind came, though it was roaring over all the snow, he wished that he had a friend with him,—just one boy to work with him. As he looked at the wall of snow before him, his heart failed for a moment. But he thought of the delight of bringing home the birds; he pushed his wooden shovel resolutely into the snow and worked away. A few days ago his mother had set the pet pigeon free; he wondered why. Pet was a beautiful blue carrier pigeon, and he had wondered very much when he saw his mother tie a little paper about her neck and send her off. Ned knew that she would fly to Mackinac Island; he thought of her now, and it seemed strange that his mother should have sent her away.

Ned was not afraid of work. He knew that if he shoveled straight enough and long enough, he would reach daylight somewhere on the hillside. The snow was soft and lightly packed. He could compress it easily on either side of him. The candle was about twenty yards away when

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he looked back. When he turned again to make sure that he was working in a straight line, the light had disappeared. He was frightened. He might work in a circle and never reach daylight. He remembered the little compass his father had given him on his birthday,—perhaps it might have been of use; he wished he had brought it. He did not think so much of the rabbits, the squirrels, or the birds now. Perhaps he might never see daylight or his mother again. He did not know what had happened; he thought that the snow had caved in between him and the candle light. He shoveled with all his might. The bow strung across his back and the game bag were somewhat in his way; but he could not part with them. He pushed ahead through the soft snow; but, after all, where was he going? The work made him warm; huge drops of perspiration fell from his forehead. His arms were tired. Oh, dear, what would his mother think? How frightened she would be! Perhaps she would start in the tunnel, too, and lose herself!

He prayed with all his might. "O dear Blessed Virgin," he said, "if you ask our Lord

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to let me out, I will say your Litany every day." He felt better after this. He set to work again, but he seemed not to get much farther. It occurred to him to thrust the shovel upward. It struck something hard. Again with all his might, he thrust it upward. It made its way through a crisp surface, and he saw a shred of grey sky. Before he made another motion, he said the Litany of the Blessed Virgin, with all his heart.

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II.

PET.

It was hard work to reach the surface of the snow. Rain had fallen and frozen upon it, and Ned's shovel had,—no doubt through the grace of Our Mother, who never refuses to hear a sincere prayer,—struck a weak place in this hard, frozen outside crust. Once on the snow with his bow and arrows and his bag safe, he raised a shout of joy. He could barely see the dark gables of the house about one hundred yards away. The snow was almost level with them, for the house was in a most exposed place for the drifts.

He slid down hill, breathing the keen morning air with delight. It had been a long time since he had been out,—such a long time for a boy who loved to be out of doors. The sun was struggling with the grey clouds in the east. He found there were no snow-drifts in the pine belt at the foot of the hill. The pines were so close together and

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wreathed with vines and entangled with evergreens that the ground was only slightly covered with soft flakes. He knew where the traps were. He ran at once,—it was so pleasant to feel his feet on hard ground,—to the great bed of dried ferns, where he had once actually seen a deer. He found the smallest trap. There were two birds in it,—prairie chickens, frozen stiff. He took them from the trap, and as he did so a squirrel, a big, fat fellow, with an enormous tail, came out of the hole in the trunk of an oak. He must have had plenty of acorns in his nest, for he looked well-fed and saucy. Here was Ned's chance. He drew his bow tight, fitted the arrow, and still the saucy squirrel did not move. He took aim;—it was not necessary to allow for the wind, for there was no wind in the wood;—he pulled. Whiz! went the arrow, and the squirrel fell over against a log. The squirrel now belonged to Ned. He looked around for another. He had no time to lose, if he was to be home before breakfast. He went somewhat farther on, to find the other trap. He hung the squirrel in the bag and carried the birds in front of him that he might smooth their soft feathers with his

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fingers. His bow and arrows were strung behind him, hanging to the bag.

The other trap was in the densest part of the pines, where the growth was so close that some of the summer's warmth seemed to have remained there. As he went along, Ned laughed aloud; he was happy, and he made plans. He could see how thick the ice was on the lake. He said to himself that his mother would have a nice breakfast, and then he would lead the way through the snow to the pines. There they would rest a while and then start over the ice for Mackinac Island.

In the other trap, he found the blue pigeon Pet, caught by the foot. She was not dead. She cooed plaintively as he gently removed her foot from under the thick stick. She was thin; almost starved to death. Tears came into Ned's eyes. The note which his mother had tied to her neck had been torn open in her struggles. It hung by the cord to her neck. Ned, not intending to read it, saw the first lines. It read,—"We shall starve in a few days. Help!" He started, and the pigeon flew from his hands. She wheeled above him, weak

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and unsteady, and then sailed away above the trees.

"Poor mother!" said Ned. "Is it indeed so bad as that? Thank God, she shall have something to eat, now,—and leave this place."

Pet wheeled over his head again, fluttered to a bough, rested a moment, and then soared aloft.

"She will die! She is too weak to reach Mackinac now," he said, "but it does not matter,—I will guide mother safely there."

He found a bit of wintergreen among the fern and put it into his pocket. He knew his mother would be very glad to see its red berries and glistening leaves. He trudged back to the foot of the hill and looked up. The sun had come out. A million little diamonds seemed to be shining on the lake and from the snow on the hill. They dazzled his eyes. Afar off he could see Mackinac Island. But he could not see the roof or the chimneys of his own house on the hill. The great pile of snow on the very top had toppled over, for he could see the group of cedars which had before been covered up. But there was no trace of his house. Where could it be? Had the wind blown it down? Had the snow

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from the top of the hill buried it? He could not tell.

He rubbed his eyes. No; he was not asleep. Everything was real. The wind was cold; he felt it drying the perspiration that had come out on his face. His mother was buried under that snow! Perhaps she was dead, suffocated and without him! He could hear her crying out now, "Ned! Ned." He listened, but it was only the wind. He could do nothing. Go to Mackinac for help? It would be dark before he could get back. No; he must find his mother. Ned was not a strong boy, and he was only ten years old, but love made him strong. He seized the stout stick he had cut, and dragging his shovel, held in the other hand, after him, he made his way up the hill. His feet sunk into the snow, for the early sun was having its effect; still, he could walk on the surface.

He prayed all the time. Over and over again he said the Litany. He made some progress toward the top of the hill, but there was no sign of his home. His heart beat very fast. How beautiful the sun and sky were! If his mother were only safe,—if his mother were only safe!

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To be sure, to find her, to be with her might be to starve to death, for the snow was getting softer and softer. In an hour or so, no creature but a bird could walk over it,—or perhaps a squirrel or a rabbit might. "Never mind," he said to himself, "I would be content to starve with her."

At one place the snow seemed softer than usual. Both feet sunk in; he flung himself on his face. It was no use; he let the shovel and stick go; he sunk down rapidly. When he could open his eyes, which were filled with snow, his feet rested against something. He felt about with his hands. He made out that he was standing on shingles. They were octagonal in shape. He knew he was on the roof of the kitchen; the shingles on the other part of the roof were oblong. The snow soft and feathery, was above his head; he made his way through it, and at last struck the chimney. Anxious as he was, he did not forget the squirrel and the birds. He dropped them down. He knew there was no fire in the big grate, and he climbed into the chimney and let himself go!

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III.

THE FIREPLACE.

MRS. MARTIN had been awakened by a loud noise on the roof of the house. She awoke in darkness, though the hand of the clock she found when she struck a match pointed to seven. She was very much frightened, but she realized what had happened. The snow at the top of the hill had fallen upon the house. She sighed, as she lit her candle, and thought that the hope of rescue was slighter than ever, for, even if Pet reached Mackinac, who would be able to dig them out of this snowy grave? In a day or two they would die of starvation or for lack of air, if the snow packed itself tight. She called out "Ned! Ned!" There was no answer. She called again. She went into his bedroom; he was not there. Downstairs she found the valentine. She read it, and concluded that Ned was hiding somewhere. As she turned to look for him, she noticed the open window. He had gone? She could only think now that he had

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tried to make a path through the snow—and had perished. The tunnel had filled up. The candle he had left was out.

Mrs. Martin, shivering, drew her shawl about her, and knelt in front of the grate. She prayed with all her might. She felt that her dear boy was dead. She prayed with all her heart that his sins might be forgiven him. She remembered with joy his fervent first Communion. Yes, he was dead,—and she would soon join him. The air was already becoming warm and close, she imagined.

Suddenly something fell at her feet. She started. It was a dead squirrel. It was followed by a bow and arrows and two birds. Then, with a great crash came Ned himself.

"Oh, Ned!" his mother cried, clasping him in her arms, in spite of his sooty face and clothes.

"I knew the Blessed Virgin would let me find you!" he said, crying.

Mrs. Martin was sorry for a moment after she had been so glad. Must Ned starve with her?

"Oh, my dear child," she said, sobbing, "why did you not go across the ice to the island and save yourself. We must both die here!"

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"And leave you?" cried Ned, indignantly. "What would Our Lord Jesus and the Blessed Virgin think of me? I guess not!"

His mother kissed him.

"Beside, mother," he said, "how can we starve? Look at my birds and the squirrel!"

The mother dried her eyes. Come what would, he should enjoy the birds and the squirrel. She prepared the squirrel for a stew, and gradually she grew more hopeful. As to Ned, he was almost happy. Was he not with his mother? And had he not proved to be a mighty hunter.

"'Who killed cock robin,'
'I,' said the sparrow
'With my little arrow,
I killed cock robin.'"

He sang this out loud, and his mother almost smiled. He told her how he had found the pigeon. She lost hope then; she felt that Pet was not strong enough to fly to Mackinac after such an imprisonment in the trap.

But she was wrong. Pet did reach Mackinac. She was picked up on the wharf by a gentleman who was strolling there. She was warmed, caressed, fed, and Mrs. Martin's message was

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read. By five o'clock in the evening the gentleman had reached the pine belt with ten others, well armed with shovels and pick-axes. The wind had changed during the day, so the chimney of the Martins' house could be seen above the snow. The party went to work with a will.

Mrs. Martin and Ned ate the last of the squirrel stew, and used the last pinch of tea powder left in the canister. She lit the candle,—she had been saving it all day,—and opened her "Life of St. Francis de Sales," to read to Ned. She determined not to show him how hopeless she was.

She snuffed the candle;—but a great noise startled her. Somebody was knocking at the kitchen door.

"A bear!" Ned said, seizing his bow and arrows.

"Let us in!" cried a human voice.

Ned opened the door; a group of kind faces met his gaze. His mother began to weep, and Ned knew that they were saved!

"Oh, mother," Ned said, as he and his mother sat on the kind gentleman's ice-boat, as he steered them toward Mackinac Island. "I forgot to

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bring my valentine, but I have the birds here!"

"Never mind," said his mother, "I have you, —my Valentine of Valentines came to me down the chimney this morning!"

"It was the Blessed Virgin," Ned said, "who helped me. I shall say her Litany as long as I live!"

In the pleasant home at Mackinac, where Mrs. Martin and Ned dwell, Pet is the spoiled member of the family.

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